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DR. BRÜNING was never very firm in the saddle. But he had scrambled over a good many fences, and it was expected that he would get at least as far as the water-jump at Lausanne. Exactly what will be the results of his fall it is hardly possible as yet to say. The Nazis will pretty certainly gain by it in the long run—and perhaps quite soon. But it seems that the new Government will have to do without their support. Herr Hitler wants a general election without delay, and he wants, of course, the withdrawal of the ban on his Brown Army and a general licence for the Nazis to say and do whatever they please. Herr von Papen is, or was, a member of Dr. Brüning's Party, the Catholic Centre, but of the extreme Right wing, so that for all practical purposes he may be counted as a Nationalist, and the members of his Cabinet are of his own complexion. He is, indeed, an astonishing choice for the Chancellorship—a "bad joke," it is said in Germany. Though he has sat in the Prussian Diet, he is now little known either at home or abroad. His past record is one over which only his enemies are likely to rejoice.

* * *

Herr von Papen is in fact the man who was accused of organising plans on a large scale for blowing up American munition factories and transports during the war, and he had to be recalled from his post as military attaché at Washington in 1915. This, no doubt, was a long time ago, and there is no reason to suspect him of incendiary designs to-day. But neither his distant nor his nearer past contains anything to inspire confidence in those whom he is going to govern or negotiate with. On the other hand it would be foolish to talk as though his Chancellorship meant the destruction of all our hopes. There was not much hope of Dr. Brüning and M. Herriot falling on each other's necks at Lausanne amid the plaudits of the German and French peoples. Dr. Brüning himself had already said as plainly as possible that Germany was going to ring down the curtain on the reparations farce. And M. Herriot on his side has been saying, only a little less plainly, that he does not regard the play as over. When it came to the point, some accommodation might have been possible. And it may still be possible, with Herr von Papen in Dr. Brüning's shoes; Herr von Papen has the reputation of being comparatively friendly towards France. But it is extremely doubtful whether the tottering edifice can be propped up for much longer—even by the mediatory efforts of Great Britain.

* * *

The alternative is for Great Britain openly to support the Germans, at the risk of offending France, in their policy of repudiating reparations. That would, of course, bring us sharp up against the question of our own payment of the war debt to the United States. None of us wants to go on paying that debt, or knows how we can find the money to do it. But we cannot, without very awkward consequences, simply announce to the Americans that we propose to wipe out the whole of our indebtedness to them, with or without their leave. Can we persuade them to cancellation? Sooner or later, of course, we can and shall. But obviously we want it to be sooner. Can we aim at a settlement at Lausanne which is contingent on the United States cancelling the debts? And can that be carried into the Conference on the stabilisation of world commodity prices? It is understood in America that this Conference will have nothing to do with war debts or reparations. But would it, in fact, be so easy to keep these questions out of a discussion of international trade and prices and the general economic condition of the world? And supposing that Lausanne had not ended in smoke or flames, the Americans might find themselves in a position where they must, willy-nilly, take stock of the prohibited subjects. There are possibilities here, at any rate, which Europeans can hardly shut their eyes to.

* * *

Meanwhile, the United States is up to its neck in domestic troubles. The President and Congress have had a desperate struggle over the new taxation to balance the budget, and the efforts of the Federal Reserve Banks to check the fall in prices and to stimulate business revival by increasing the supply of credit are still producing very little effect. There is now certainly no shortage of credit in the United States. The difficulty is to get the available money brought into use. In the meantime, gold continues to flow out of America, and, while there is still a vast surplus of gold in the banking system, the efflux, and still more the condition of the foreign exchanges, seems to be creating some alarm. We think it is fantastic to suggest that the United States can be driven off the gold standard. But there is an undoubted tendency for money to leave the country, and this stands powerfully in the way of the Reserve Banks' attempts to raise prices and stimulate business activity. It is still too soon to pass any final judgment on the effects of the "open market" policy of the Federal Reserve Banks, but it is, at any rate, evident that the dose will have to be far larger, and will be much longer in taking effect, than most of the monetary reform enthusiasts hoped.

* * *

Our National Government is, as it often assures us, a convinced supporter of the League of Nations; but it has a curious way of dissembling its affection. Its demand for an inquiry into the Geneva budget has no real justification. If we may assume that the functions the League performs are worth performing (and only Lord Beaverbrook and his Empire-mad friends deny that), Great Britain's contribution cannot be called unduly high. It amounted in 1931 to a sum of 3,225,000 Swiss francs. That is rather more than one-tenth of the total League budget, and a negligible fraction of our own budget. The suggestion is that there should be a 10 per cent. cut, which would result in the magnificent economy for us of £15,000. It cannot be honestly maintained that there is waste or extravagance to be reduced. The finances of the League are very closely controlled and supervised. The salaries of League officials, which constitute a little more than half the total expenditure and which are singled out for criticism in the British proposals, have been fixed recently after a long and careful examination, and in view of all the facts—especially the cost of living in Geneva and the expatriation involved—they are not over-generous. Neither on this item nor on any other can the axe be applied without impairing the efficiency of the League. Has it occurred to anyone at Westminster, we wonder, that a cut of 0.01 per cent. in expenditure on armaments would save more money (not to mention other things besides money) than a 10 per cent. cut in the League's budget?

* * *

The Report of the Indian Franchise Committee is a sound piece of work, which should do much to dispel the feeling, so widespread in India, that the new constitution is being held up indefinitely. Lord Lothian is to be congratulated upon getting a Report which is unanimous except for a few unimportant minutes of dissent. Under present conditions the Committee has probably been wise in refusing to recommend any complicated systems or fancy franchises. At one time several members, Indian as well as English, favoured the indirect or group method of voting, but this requires a greater measure of good will, and a more homogeneous population, than can be found in most parts of India. The chief argument for it disappears if it is possible to follow the Committee's recommendation and enfranchise over 40 per cent. of the adult male population for the Provincial legislatures. They suggest doing this by lowering the property qualification, though they also add an educational qualification, independent of property. Some urban bias will remain, but the bulk of this very large electorate must be villagers. The Committee recommend a far smaller electorate for the Central Assembly, but their proposal to take the present provincial electors as their basis is probably all that is possible under a system of direct voting. There is also sound common-sense, if not much logic, in their proposals for ensuring a fair proportion of women voters, and for getting labour and depressed class representation. Many will regret the recommendation to retain special seats for landlords, who are already over-represented, but the Report is on the whole a sensible document.

* * *

The preparations for the Ottawa Conference are now at the stage when every conceivable sectional interest is claiming that it ought to be officially represented, or ought to have more representatives, if it is represented already. The National Farmers' Union is up in arms because the official representation of agriculture has been conceded, not to it, but to the leader of the Conservative Agricultural Committee in the House of Commons. Each separate industry thinks it ought to have its own delegate, and when the Government replies that it is taking a delegation, and not an invading army, to Ottawa, the clamour is by no means stilled. This eagerness to secure representation seems at least to show that British business men are taking the Conference seriously; but it is not easy to say whether hopes or fears are uppermost in their minds. For some of them at any rate, including

the representatives of agriculture, the safeguarding of the home market against Empire as well as foreign imports is a far more pressing question than the stimulation of trade with the Dominions. That a stabilisation of Empire Preference as a part of the British tariff system will be arranged at Ottawa is a foregone conclusion. But of new or helpful results to be secured at the Conference there is not yet much sign. For will a Wheat Quota, on terms we can accept, help the Dominions? And what more are they prepared to concede to us? We raise these questions with no desire to cry down the Conference, but rather in the hope of getting the various delegations down to brass tacks.

* * *

The Railway Clerks' Conference can hardly have been surprised at the Minister of Transport's rejection of their plan for nationalising the railways, though they may have been at the bluntness with which it was conveyed. They replied with a strong reaffirmation of their demand for the co-ordination of the transport services under public ownership and control, and instructed their executive to press on with the joint campaign of the three railway Unions with this object in view. A further decline of over £5,000,000 has already occurred in railway receipts during the present year; and the schemes for reducing competition which are now being worked out between the main line railways seemed to the Conference wholly inadequate. In their view, what is needed is complete unification of the railways under a single controlling Board, and close co-ordination with road transport services under a common final authority. They do not suggest that the railways should be managed by a Minister in Parliament, like the Post Office. They advocate—and they have been doing so ever since the war—an expert Board similar to the Central Electricity Board.

* * *

The success in the Derby of Mr. Tom Walls, actor-manager and owner-trainer, was enthusiastically received by everyone except the punter. The principal beneficiaries of the race are the bookmakers, who, with a favourite starting at the sensational odds of 5 to 4, must all have made their fortunes; and, of course, the Irish Hospitals. Enthusiasm for the gigantic gamble of the Dublin sweep, with a *cagnotte* that is now in the neighbourhood of a million pounds, is still mounting. For the first time subscriptions exceeded a total of £4,000,000, of which some £3,000,000 (judging by the draw) was subscribed in Britain. This presumably means that some ten million Britons had an interest, direct or indirect, in the sweep. Nevertheless, the Home Office, with admirable humour, is still instituting prosecutions against individuals whose "offers" to sell tickets are detected in the post. There seems here a very appropriate starting-point for the labours of the Royal Commission on Lotteries.

* * *

An Irish correspondent writes: The Senate is allowing the Oath Bill to be read a second time with the promise of an amendment later to secure that the Act shall be brought into effect by an Order in Council stating that agreement on the Oath question has been reached between the parties to the Treaty of 1921. The announcement of this policy brought forth violent threats against the Senate from the Minister for Posts—himself a Senator—but since there is a clear majority against the Bill the amendment, if moved, will be carried, and should reach the Dail before that body rises on July 8th. Ministers have declared that they will accept no change in the Bill, and as the loyalty of the Dail Labour Party is beyond question disagreement between the two Houses will result. Mr. De Valera will then have two courses open. An identical measure passed again through the Dail—a weary process—would become law within eighteen months in spite of the other House. As an alternative the President may dissolve and go to the country. If he were returned with a majority a new Oath Bill could be passed and signed by the Governor-General over the head of the Senate within sixty days. This latter course has been freely threatened, but we could hardly have an election before October. August and September are not suitable for the farming community. The campaign would proceed upon the slogan "Remove the Oath to the British King and abolish the Imperialist Freemason Senate." Freemason, as used in this political context, means Atheist, Anti-Christian, or worse. The Senate, as a matter of fact, has a majority of Catholics and Nationalists, and some of its non-Catholic members have a long record of national service.

The fear that Fianna Fail would win on an issue such as this has prompted certain people to advise the Senate to pass the Bill without amendment and thus bring us up at once against the consequences—if there be any. But if Mr. De Valera can secure a majority in the Dail, he is pledged in any event to abolish the second House. Could an Autumn election be kept to any single or simple issue? The Budget with its burdens and inconveniences—and its possible new factories—would be to the fore. The results—or lack of results—from the Ottawa Conference would be known. The situation with regard to the land annuities, an instalment of which we are to retain next month, would be clearer. We might know whether our preference in the British market was to continue beyond November. If the issue were secession from the Commonwealth, the result of a free election would hardly be in doubt. But there are pessimists who predict that, in remote places at any rate, voters will be anything but free.

* * *

Appalling reports of the Chinese famine continue to come from Sir John Hope Simpson, who was appointed on the nomination of the League of Nations to organise the relief work in the flooded area. Recent cables speak of people eating "bark, grass and chaff." "Nothing left to sell except children—six Chinese dollars for a boy, ten for a girl." The relief funds are now exhausted and there are still three weeks to go before the beginning of the first harvest. The lives of several millions of persons therefore depend on the immediate arrival of help. The Committee calculate that five shillings suffices to keep an adult or two children alive for a month. Contributions should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, China Flood Relief Committee, Edinburgh House, 2, Eaton Gate, S.W.1. All funds received will be remitted to Sir John Hope Simpson.

THE COAL BILL

THOUGH the Coal Mines Bill which has been before the House of Commons this week is a Government measure, in effect it embodies the terms which the mine-owners offered to the miners some time ago. The miners rejected these terms, and made their own proposals to the Government. But neither they nor anyone else can be surprised to find that the Government has come down on the owners' side. The owners themselves are not unanimous, since some of them are still hankering after a return to complete *laisser faire,* and would have liked to see the entire system of public regulation of the industry go. The majority of the owners, however, are not of this mind; they want compulsory powers from the State to regulate the industry, and they recognise that the Government cannot turn its back on the long tradition of regulating miners' hours by Act of Parliament. Briefly, the situation which the Government had to face in drafting its new Bill was this. The Act passed by the Labour Government is on the point of expiry; and if it were allowed merely to expire, without fresh legislation being passed, two things would happen. First, the compulsory powers to regulate output and prices, conferred upon the owners by the Labour Act, would simply lapse. Secondly, under the Act of 1920 there would have to be an immediate reduction of the working shift to seven hours. The owners are united in demanding that the longer working shift shall remain. On the question of the compulsory regulation of output and prices they are divided, but a large majority favour their continuance with some amendment, which can be achieved by altering the regulations without affecting the broad terms of the Act.

There is a third question, closely related to these other two, round which the real differences between miners and owners are most intense. The owners, by a flat refusal to co-operate, were able to render absolutely inoperative the statutory provision made by the Labour Government for the regulation of wages, and to insist that the wage-question should be left to be settled by collective bargaining, or in the last resort at their own dictation. But hours and wages are clearly bound up together. The owners always insist that any reduction of working hours would necessarily involve lower wages, and the miners claim that if the State regulates hours it ought to regulate wages as well. Thus, if the temporary suspension of the seven hours shift, which was enforced after the dispute of 1926, is to be indefinitely prolonged, the miners maintain that this continued extension of working hours should be accompanied by statutory safeguards against the arbitrary reduction of wages. They want public provision for fixing a minimum wage, at any rate for as long as the working shift is allowed to exceed seven hours.

The owners will have none of this. They object to wages being regulated at all by the State. They are prepared, in return for an indefinite prolongation of the seven-and-a-half hours shift, to undertake not to reduce wage rates for a period of one year. They will make no promise beyond the one year, and they will not agree to any provision for wage-control being included in the Act. The miners answer that, if wages are to be safeguarded only for a single year, hours also should be settled for one year only, and the two related questions be left to come up again together. For otherwise, they maintain, with longer working hours already sanctioned by the State, they will be forced to bargain about wages with one hand tied behind their back. The Government, as was to be expected, has now overridden this reasonable plea, and given the owners an indefinite continuance of the longer working shift, without any wage-guarantee for more than a year, or any provision for regulating wages when the year expires.

The miners, it is safe to say, did not expect to be able to secure at present a return to the seven-hour day. They had a strong case for demanding a compromise—the working shift of seven hours and a quarter embodied in the Draft International Convention, which was accepted at Geneva last year. A lead given by Great Britain in ratifying this Convention would have been a most valuable example to other coal-producing nations, and a great help to the whole idea of international agreement embodied in the I.L.O. But it has to be admitted that, in the present state of world trade, there would have been little chance of its speedy general enforcement. Neither Germany nor Poland would have been likely to act on it in their present plight, and the British owners were right enough in saying that it would have been hard for them to reduce hours without cutting wages in the present state of international competition. Obviously, in face of the surplus of man-power and production capacity, the right course is to reduce miners' hours in all countries, but it is not easy for any one country to take the lead. There is, in our view, a good deal to be said for the Government meeting the cost of the reduction, in order to set an example and to get more miners at work. There is clearly no hope of the present Government doing this.

The miners were accordingly prepared to submit to a continuance of the present working hours for a longer period. But the new Bill, by making the prolongation indefinite without any guarantee as to wages, very greatly worsens their bargaining position for the future, and makes a serious coal crisis likely in a year's time. Miners' wages have already been cut to the bone, and the position of the coal trade is still getting worse. What is to happen to wages when the year's guarantee given by the owners expires?

The answer should be largely in terms of the re-organisation of the industry, on both its productive and its selling sides. It is at least to the good that the Government has refused to endorse the demand of many of the owners that the Coal Mines Re-organisation Committee, which is supposed to have part of this task in hand, shall be disbanded. But what in fact is the Committee doing? Nothing has been heard of its brave plans for district colliery amalgamations for a long time past. Has it been told to go slow? And can it, if it attempts to put its plans into force, rely on the support of the Government in face of the certain opposition of the mine-owners? We doubt if it can. Indeed, it looks very much as if the Committee were being kept in being on the condition that it shall do nothing.

Nor is the marketing problem being tackled at all. The regulation of output and prices is quite a different thing from the effective co-ordination of selling agencies in such a way as to reduce the expenses of distribution. It is clear that the coal industry will never be able to afford decent wages until there have been wholesale amalgamations designed to reduce the costs of production, and until marketing expenses have been drastically scaled down, superfluous middlemen and merchants eliminated, and methods of transport rationalised. Any attempt to settle the questions of wages and hours in the coal industry without tackling these major issues is bound to lead to merely temporary and highly unsatisfactory adjustments, and to perpetuate the sense of gross injustice among the miners. Nor is that all. The longer we leave the coal industry in its present unsatisfactory condition, the harder the task of retrieving it is going to be. What the industry needs is a national authority capable of enforcing thorough co-ordination and of taking in hand the vital and now commercially practicable measures for extracting oil from coal. Instead of that, the Government offers us yet another patched-up settlement of wages and hours, with the near certainty of further trouble in a year's time.

A NEW CURRENCY

II. THE PAPER POUND AND FOREIGN TRADE.

LET us begin by looking back on the distance travelled in my first article. We had abolished gold for our internal currency. We had chosen a group of commodities and services, representative of the energy and expenditure of the British people, and having calculated an average price for the group, the parts being weighted according to their importance, we had decided to take this composite commodity price index as the standard of value for our new paper pound. We considered it fairly easy to manage this paper standard, for the Bank of England would be under no limitation of a fiduciary note issue. Minor fluctuations in the composite commodity price index could be countered by contraction or expansion of credit, but it was fully appreciated that to maintain a constant purchasing power for the paper pound a right balance would have to be maintained between spending and saving—that there must be a State regulation of industry by which each improvement in the efficiency and economy of production would go to increase wages as well as profits. So far the advance has been over easy ground. Even the Macmillan Committee had proposed that the note issue should have no specific gold cover, and that the Issue Department and the Banking Department of the Bank of England should be amalgamated. But how is the new paper pound to work in conjunction with gold standard currencies? How are extreme fluctuations in the exchanges to be avoided, and how are international balances to be settled?

It is here that timid monetary reformers have misgivings. They are afraid to leave the cardinal doctrine of the gold standard—that a gold reserve must be held by the Bank of England for the purpose of settling international balances and maintaining stability of the foreign exchanges. The right to demand gold in exchange for local purchasing power or local purchasing power in exchange for gold within certain prescribed rates is so widely believed to be the only workable basis for our international trade, that we have become mesmerised by the machine we have created. Destroy this international basis of exchange, it is argued, and you destroy international trade. And should not Great Britain be the last country to attack the international gold standard, seeing that London is an international money centre and its earnings from financial commissions and agencies amounted in depressed 1931 to about one sixth of our overseas invisible income? Moreover, we have, or had, some £4,000,000,000 of capital invested overseas, and according to rentier principles the monetary policy of Great Britain should be to restore the gold value of its investment income.

All these arguments of the high priests and elders of the City are well known, and in 1924 snared us into the trap of a return to the gold standard, but to-day they will merely cause anyone to smile who contemplates the ruins of international trade. Everywhere we see tariffs increased, imports restricted or prohibited, licences required even for exports, "blocked accounts" in company with moratoria, defaults or even repudiation. In fact, international trade has broken down, exporters cannot obtain payment for their goods, and many countries are reduced to bartering with one another for their essential supplies. London as an international money centre is hamstrung by "standstill" agreements. The investment income of Great Britain is diminishing monthly by defaults. Now, if the international gold exchange system is the only practicable basis of international trade, why on earth has it collapsed? An edifice does not crumble unless its base is rotten.

It is surely time that we changed our whole conception of international trade. Under the old gold standard it was assumed that the efflux and influx of gold, in the settlement of international balances, produced equilibrium by altering the level of prices in the lending and receiving countries respectively, thus enabling a debtor country, whose prices were deflated by the efflux, to export more, and a creditor country, whose prices were inflated by the influx, to export less. But it is obvious from a study of the post-war history of the international gold standard that the system has not been allowed to work according to this beautiful theory. The creditor countries have not given the debtor countries a fair deal. The Macmillan Committee exposed the root of the trouble in the following comment:

> The position of debtor countries is apt to deteriorate rather than improve as a result of their having to export gold. . . . Their credit as borrowers suffers. Thus, having lost their gold and not being able to borrow, they are forced off the gold standard. . . . And creditor countries, fearing to provoke an inflation by letting the new gold produce a rise in prices, try in effect to make themselves insensitive to further imports.

This implies that the creditor countries refuse to take goods in repayment of their gold debts, with the result that the debtor countries are ultimately forced to default on their external debt service.

I conclude that the international gold exchange system has broken down because it was against international equity. Is it equitable to make the debtor country finance the creditor country's export surplus, and then to prevent the debtor country repaying its debt in services and goods? Equity dictates that the creditor country should finance its own surplus of exports by internal loans, instead of the debtor country financing its surplus of imports by external loans. And if we are all agreed that international debts can only be repaid in services and goods—a principle which is the root of our whole reparations and war debts policy—why do we not put it into practice in our international trading system? It would be possible to do so if countries anxious to trade with one another on this enlightened basis decided to establish Clearing Houses for their mutual trade and a London Pool for their exchanges. The machinery of the commercial banks could be utilised for this purpose, just as the Australian commercial banks in London are utilised for the purpose of the Australian Exchange Pool, but rates of exchange would be fixed by certain banks appointed by the Governments as agents for the exchange monopoly. I would also invoke the help of the efficient, but now almost derelict, machinery of the London money market for the purpose of financing a

British export surplus. I am sure that the leaders of the money market would rejoice to be able to serve British industries instead of serving, as they have done in the past, the industries of foreign countries.

I venture to suggest that the Government of Great Britain should immediately make a Declaration of the Rights of International Trade to the nations of the world somewhat on the following lines.

"Having established an inconvertible paper currency, based upon a composite commodity price index, and being convinced that the gold system of international exchange has been operated to the disadvantage of debtor countries and is, in fact, the cause of the present breakdown of international trade, we, the people of Great Britain, propose to set up a Clearing House for our external trade with every country which will co-operate with us in our new system of currency and exchange, on the understanding that if we are a creditor on international account (visible and invisible receipts and outgoings included) we will not ask the debtor to settle the difference except in goods and services, and if we are a debtor we will also not be asked to settle our account with the creditor except in goods and services. Details of the workings of the Clearing House will be laid down in a Trade Treaty to be entered into with each nation willing to trade with us on this new basis of equity."

This project may sound revolutionary, but I believe it would have far greater chance of success than the narrow, Imperialistic conference at Ottawa. The arguments against the plan would be that the Clearing Houses would be State controlled and that State control dams the flow of international trade, that half of the world or more would refuse to join in, and that Great Britain would be cut off from essential raw material or food supplies and left to starve or decline in isolation. But I am not proposing State licences of imports and exports, blocked accounts and the rest of the restrictive paraphernalia to which the gold standard fiasco has already reduced many debtor countries. I have shown that by enlisting the support of the banks and money market the Clearing House will facilitate external trade. And the interesting feature of my plan is that the great producers of raw materials and foodstuffs are already debtors in their international account relative to Great Britain. They would immediately benefit from the granting of sterling exchange credits to finance their purchases of British goods in excess of their exports to Great Britain. Would Argentina, or Australia, or Roumania refuse to send food supplies to Great Britain if they were assured that they could buy British goods without the disagreeable condition of external borrowing? The new basis of international trade would be open to any country inside or outside the British Empire which desires to see the wheels of trade moving again freely without the brake of the gold system of exchange. In fact, the only alternative to this plan for most debtor countries is complete ruin or a lower standard of living for a generation.

The question as to how Great Britain will trade with countries on the gold standard who refuse to co-operate in the new system is not difficult to answer. We still have a fair stock of gold at the Bank of England which we should use to settle our debts with countries who persist in ruining their trade by clinging to an outworn and inequitable system of gold exchange. In our future trade we should, of course, have to see that our imports from balanced with our exports to these unenlightened peoples, so that there may be no appreciable international balances to settle. The export trade of the gold standard countries, in other words, would certainly dwindle away. Thus the rates of exchange between sterling and the gold standard countries could be left to find their own level. I have no doubt that as trade expanded between us and the countries following our new system of international exchange London would regain its premier position as the entrepôt for international trade. In any case, this talk about the £50,000,000 earnings of London as a financial centre is so much claptrap, seeing that the bulk of the profits of our international finance houses in times past was invested overseas.

What a sense of relief most of us would feel when we realised that our national prosperity and reputation were no longer at the mercy of international financiers, that we no longer had to borrow £130,000,000 to keep the pound from falling in the autumn and another £150,000,000 (in an exchange equalisation fund) to keep the pound from rising in the spring; that we no longer had to ruin our debtors in an effort to collect their debts in gold; and that we really could unite finance with common sense and international trade with justice.

E. H. DAVENPORT.

A LONDON DIARY

I HAVE seldom come across a more just or more pulverising retort than Mr. Oliver Stanley's reply to Sir Charles Oman in the Sunday Cinema debate. Sir Charles argued that it was "absolutely wrong" to permit children to be demoralised by sex and crime films on Sunday as well as on other days of the week and quoted terrible examples of the intelligent interest in these films taken by the schoolchildren of Birmingham. Mr. Oliver Stanley replied that Sir Charles probably exaggerated the impression made upon children.

> When I was a child the opportunities for education by the cinema were not so frequent or so good as they are now, and I acquired a good part of my education from the text books of the Hon. Member. If I had been questioned at the time as to the impression made upon me I should have said that the chief impression was that there were ninety-nine battles every one hundred years in the history of the world and that the best people who ever lived were the people who had killed most of their enemies. Subsequent experience has proved that the impression was quite wrong. I have no doubt that the fleeting impression which children get from the cinema is not really a true one.

The retort exactly hits each nail on the head. If we were going to start a censorship at all, history-books like Sir Charles Oman's would be the first things to ban. I remember Oman's book when I was at school. To give children a patriotic, military view of history does far more harm than any sex stuff, more harm than all the slush and slop of Hollywood. Even so, Oliver Stanley and I are not the only two to survive Sir Charles's propaganda. The only practical remedy in dealing with bad films or bad text books is to provide good ones. Now that there are some good text books quite a number of schools use them, and I notice that in the catastrophic fall of cinema shares in the United States the one company which continues to do well is Loew's, which is the one American company to try to produce good films. I gather that the Committee on educational and cultural films is likely to report on the right lines and to suggest setting up a National Film Institute, a sort of non-monopolistic counterpart of the B.B.C. which will be responsible for sponsoring well-produced films. Why should all the good pictures come from Russia, Germany and France? One suggestion is that this Institute should be financed as hospitals are now financed—by a percentage levy on the proceeds of Sunday films. I gather this idea finds support in the trade and it has very substantial backing in the House. Mr. John Buchan, Mr. Oliver Stanley, Mr. Lansbury and others all advocated it in the debate. There may be the germs here of something really big.

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Until recently I used to wonder, when people said "the capitalist system is breaking down," or "the economic system is breaking down," just exactly what they meant. What form would the breakdown take? Well, in part at least, the answer is now clear. "It" has already broken down in many places, and if it breaks down much further international intercourse—whether economic or otherwise—

must dry up altogether. Take the experience of a friend of mine who has just returned from Greece. He describes it like this:

> Returning by the Orient Express, somewhere about midnight, as we approached the frontier between Greece and Jugoslavia, the sleeping-car attendant came into my compartment and asked me whether I had much money on me. I said that I had three or four £5 notes, 1,500 drachmæ, 200 francs, and 100 lire. He then told me—what no one had told me before—that I ought to have declared all the money I had on entering Greece, and have got it endorsed on my passport; that I was only allowed to take out of Greece 300 drachmæ for myself and 300 for my companion; that all the rest of my money would be confiscated at the frontier. He advised me to hide everything except 600 drachmæ in the little electric light box in the berths. I concealed a certain amount of my money (not in the electric light), but declared a substantial amount above the sum allowed. I pointed out to the customs official who interrogated me that (a) I had never been told of the regulation when I entered Greece, and (b) the price of food on the Orient Express made it impossible for two people to keep themselves from starvation from Monday night until Wednesday morning on 600 drachmæ (just over £1). The official politely admitted my argument, sadly agreed that "it" was breaking down, firmly insisted upon the law, but after a little argument allowed me to keep my money.

* * *

Here is another example of "it" breaking down. A business man of my acquaintance has a customer in Vienna. He is not a large customer, but he used to buy goods to the value of between £50 and £100 pretty regularly every year. The account used to be settled quarterly, the Austrian sending a cheque or my friend drawing a bill. During the last year payment had been getting irregular and my friend asked his customer to settle an account for about £20. A cheque arrived which my friend paid into his bank in the ordinary way. His bank now informs him that, owing to a recent decree in Austria, they cannot obtain payment except against an equivalent amount of their own travellers' cheques which have been cashed in Austria, and that even so, when the transaction has been effected, the discount on the cheque will be about 25 per cent. Consider what this means. It means that in order that the capitalist system may transfer £20 from A's account in Vienna to B's in London, B has to wait until the depositors in B's bank have spent £20 on travellers' cheques in Austria, and that even then B will get only £15 for his goods instead of the £20 for which he sold them. Clearly something has broken down between Austria and London.

* * *

No satirist yet born could do justice to the discussions of the experts at Geneva. A few days ago we understood from Sir John Simon that the British Government favoured the limitation of tanks to a maximum size of, say, seven tons. But last Tuesday Lord Stanhope, the Under-Secretary for War, prompted no doubt by his technical advisers, solemnly put the figure at twenty-five tons. Below that tonnage (say about twenty tons) he argued that they ceased to be really offensive weapons: "armies should be allowed to retain these weapons to enable them to continue to economise in man-power and expenditure, and be able to employ these weapons for ordinary police work in the colonies and elsewhere." Now a twenty-five-ton tank would be (I say would be, because I believe such a thing is hardly in existence yet) a thing many times the size of a heavy motor lorry—a land battleship. But battleships of 35,000 tons displacement, we notice, are also purely defensive weapons in the opinion of the American and the Japanese, as well as the British, admirals. Our British Admiral Pound remarked that

> large capital ships were particularly well equipped to check the offensive operations of the enemy. During the world war it had been noted that they were chiefly employed for defensive purposes, in particular for the protection of convoys. Only on very rare occasions had they been employed for offensive operations.

* * *

Can that be beaten? Yes, by the French Minister of Marine who replied to Admiral Pound. He repudiated the idea that submarines might be regarded as offensive weapons. Of all naval weapons submarines, he said, were "the least threatening to civilians. The submarine alone was almost purely defensive." Any anti-offensive policy was France's policy, he said, but really the submarine was a necessary weapon.

> The members of the Commission had heard from the small nations—and France repeated it with them and after them—that the naval supremacy of the powerful nations with large navies might become insupportable if submarines, the weapon of the poor, did not introduce an element of mystery, of the unknown, at sea, so that the more powerful fleets would never be certain of success should they be tempted to abuse their powers. The submarine was a weapon against the pride of power. It could be the support of the righteous. It must be retained.

No: on second thoughts I see no reason for a satirist. These experts are their own best commentators.

* * *

I see that Mr. Arnold-Forster has made a careful calculation about the annual world cost of armaments. During 1931, in the depth of economic depression, they cost about £980,000,000, "a sum equal to one gold pound for every minute since the birth of Christ"! CRITIC.

DETERRING THE ROAD HOG

When a controversial Bill has been masticated thoroughly in the mouth of Parliament it is possibly dangerous to endow it with any very definite label of policy. This particularly applies to the Road Traffic Act (1930), which represented no less reluctant a compromise than the Anglican Prayer-book of 1662. Nevertheless, its compromise outlined something of a policy, in which the following motives were still plainly discernible when the mangled draft emerged into law:

1. By the abolition of the old speed limit the actual speeds of the day were legalised, provided they were not used to the public danger.
2. Compulsory insurance safeguarded the financial interests of innocent victims.
3. No new offences of substantial importance were created.
4. Alarming potential penalties were scheduled for imposition at the discretion of magistrates (on summary conviction) or of juries (under indictment).

Behind the Act lay a desire common to all the conflicting interests and opinions that the roads should be made safer, and that the toll of life and limb should be substantially reduced. When we review the four high points of the Act it becomes obvious that the new laws could only affect safety by dint of *intimidation.* Fines of up to £100 per offence, terms of six months' imprisonment and upwards, and cancellation of driving licences, were the levers by which reckless or clumsy driving was to be restrained. The desired atmosphere of intimidation was instantaneously created. When the Act became law most motorists took the road in a spirit of novel anxiety. The majority of motorists are decent, law-abiding citizens. The idea of imprisonment had never entered their heads, unless perhaps by some ignorance or carelessness they should fall foul of a vindictive surveyor of taxes. But on the day when this Act became law imaginative drivers began to picture the clang of prison doors. It was possible that the most skilful and careful motorist might be involved in a road crash, and that for want of reliable witnesses and a discriminating bench or judge he might be sent to gaol for four months. As time passed, this atmosphere of apprehension was dissipated. Here and there a paragraph recorded that some motorist had lost his licence, or been fined £50, or sent to serve a term of four months in prison. But the incidence of such cases was no heavier than it had been under the obsolete Acts, and a scrutiny of the press reports suggested that the victims were all scandalous persons. They had driven under the influence of liquor; or they had charged along urban thoroughfares at Brooklands speeds; or there had been some other element of the old criminality in their breaches of the new Act. The general mass of drivers breathed their relief and reverted to the old standards of driving. The toll of road deaths and injuries peaked anew. The complete failure of the new Act to limit road casualties was revealed. It may be regarded as a dead letter from this point of view, so long as it is administered in the present spirit by benches and juries.

If we turn to the clauses of the Act we find that the offence of " reckless driving " is divorced from sheer speed. A car may be driven at a speed much slower than the maximum allowed for its type of vehicle. Yet if this restricted speed or the manner in which the car is driven is dangerous, considering the amount of traffic, or the nature of the road, or the condition of the road, the driver may be convicted of reckless driving. On summary conviction, for a first offence, by a police court, he may be fined £50 or sent to prison for four months. On second and subsequent convictions he may be fined £100, or sent to prison for four months, or both. Under the present administration of the law there is not the least prospect of such heavy penalties being inflicted except in really scandalous cases. The ordinary culpabilities are not even charged under this clause, but under the " careless driving " heading. Under that heading it is an offence to drive without due care or attention or reasonable consideration, and the maximum penalty for a first offence under the " careless driving " clause is a fine of £20; on second and subsequent convictions for careless driving the penalty rises to a fine not exceeding £50 or three months' imprisonment.

This policy of mild administration is, of course, adopted by people in the closest possible touch with road offences. Chief constables and magistrates appear to have decided that it would not be right to institute a system of terrorism, and to send decent citizens to prison or fine poor men £100 for the common kind of blunder or miscalculation which produces a typical road crash and kills or injures one or more road users. These authorities presumably hold that, in view of the congestion on the roads, the handicaps of fog and grease and dazzle, the obsolete character of so many roads and road junctions, the carelessness of so many pedestrians, and the inexperience of so many motorists, the majority of accidents impute a blame that is less than criminal to the culprits. They apparently consider that the stigma of imprisonment and the crippling effects of £100 fines ought to be reserved for genuinely scandalous offences, and should not be extended to the sort of miscalculation which an ordinary citizen may perpetrate every day of the week. This verdict cannot be lightly impugned. It is evidently pronounced by capable men with an enormous mass of data at their command.

Meanwhile we remain confronted with the colossal toll of life and limb which the roads annually demand. In the face of this toll we cannot as a nation remain mute and inert. We must either reorganise our roads and our traffic till the casualty list shrinks to more tolerable dimensions, or we must convince drivers of their responsibility, and institute not a reign of lurid terrorism, but an atmosphere of rather sterner intimidation. Such an atmosphere can be created without difficulty and without very serious hardship to comparatively innocent persons. A few borderline cases of seriously clumsy or reckless driving, distributed over the country, must be punished with maximum fines and short terms of imprisonment. To imagine a concrete case: a citizen of position drinks a cocktail before dinner, and two or three glasses of claret at dinner. He goes out, and kills a cyclist whilst he is taking a chance after being dazzled by a string of oncoming cars. Is there any sound reason why he should not be sent to prison as a deterrent to other drivers? He was not drunk. He was not speeding. But he deliberately put his car on a piece of road which he did not know to be vacant. And a previously unspotted reputation should not save him.

R. E. DAVIDSON.

FOREIGN TRAVEL

ONLY a few years ago it looked as if the world had reached an age of ever-increasing mobility, whether of people or of things, and as if nothing but the crack of doom could put an end to the process. There were visionaries who foresaw a time when two lovers living in London would be able to fly to Greenland for afternoon tea and be back in time for the opera at Covent Garden. A brace of grouse shot on a Scottish moor, we were told, would be delivered in time to be cooked for dinner on the same evening in Honolulu. One had a vision of the sky black with machines carrying persons and parcels, almost as fast as light itself, to and from the ends of the earth. And all this seemed very good.

Recently, however, this extraordinary mobility has slowed down. Even food lies rotting, incapable of motion. The desires of men remain much the same, but they no longer exercise the old magnetic attraction on the things in other countries that men desire. Trade that was once as busy as a dance of midges threatens to grow as still as the dying population on a fly-paper. Is it that we are entering a period of hibernation out of which we may not awake into the enchantment of the sun again till centuries have passed?

For it is not only the exchange of things that is slowing down. The interchange of human beings is also growing increasingly languid. Man, who has the will to travel, finds it almost as difficult to obey this will as if heavy weights were chained to his ankles, or as if he had been suddenly trapped in a bog. Tens of thousands of people wish to go to the Riviera and the Riviera wishes to welcome them, but some mysterious disability has fallen on the human race. The traveller cannot reach his longed-for destination, and the lamp in the inn is lit for him in vain. Perhaps we are gradually getting struck into a prolonged stillness like the characters in *The Sleeping Beauty*. More and more we are getting to resemble the figures on the Grecian urn save in their eternal loveliness. We are emerging from the age of gold into the lethargic age of lead.

As Satan, however, when cast out of Paradise, sought some alternative to despair for himself and his startled companions, so we, too, may look around not without hope for some compensation for the loss of our unlimited mobility. If the old desire for a summer holiday in Patagonia can no longer be satisfied, may it not be that there are fairer Patagonias nearer at hand? The South Seas have withdrawn to an infinite distance from us, but shall we be merely cheating ourselves if we believe that seas as blue and as magical wash shores that are all but a Sabbath day's journey within our reach? If so, let us determinedly cheat ourselves, since most of the pleasures of travel are based on illusion. Look across from Hampstead Heath up Highgate on a day steeped in sunshine and believe that you are in Italy, and for most (if not all) practical purposes you will be in Italy.

After all, what we seek most in foreign travel is strangeness. We wish to see the world we know in unfamiliar aspects, and wherever we can do this we are travellers even if we go no farther than the Mile End Road. Naturally, the sense of the unfamiliar is strongest when the landscape is such as we never saw before and the speech, the dress and the buildings are all strange to us. If the French people spoke English, and had the same coinage as the English, far fewer English people would wish to spend their summer holidays on the north coast of France. Even the names over the shops are a source of pleasure to the stranger, and the unaccustomed money tells him as he handles it that he is no longer in the dull workaday world of the half-crown and the shilling. He is not excited by the speech of his fellow-creatures if he goes to Brighton, since he can understand it; but let him go to Dieppe, and the speech of his fellow-creatures, being as a rule little known to him, delights him like a kind of kaleidoscope of sound, at once meaningless and beautiful. To be in a country where men are actually called "Alphonse"—is not that something for which it is well worth braving Ocean? At every turn some tiny novelty charms him. The faces of the people and their gestures are so strange that he looks at human beings with a closer interest than he would have looked at them if he had gone to Skegness. He no longer feels at home, and an Englishman on holiday is never so happy as when he no longer feels at home.

The question remains, however, whether it is necessary for him to go to the Continent, or farther, in order to escape from his domestic prison. It seems to me likely that, as the range of mobility lessens, the Englishman will gradually discover that most of the pleasures of travel are to be had within these islands. What could be stranger to a Londoner than Sussex, where the natives greet each other on a windy, wintry morning with the extraordinary expression, "Cold blow!"? Go even as far as Southend and the coast of Essex, and you will see names over the shop windows such as you never knew existed. Travel to Manchester, and you will find foods as marvellous as any the Anthropophagi ever ate—parkins and chitterlings and tripe cooked in unfamiliar modes. Journey westward, and in Devonshire and Cornwall you will discover miraculous creams and eat saffron-cake and pasties such as you would not willingly eat in London, but such as have at least the charm of novelty to a stranger. Fly northward and make Oban your halting-place, and, if you go into a quayside public house, you will see man after man coming in and ordering himself a half-pint of strong ale and a half-glass of whisky, swallowing the whisky undiluted at a gulp and sending the ale after it as a "chaser." Not a county you enter but you will find that it has its own idiosyncrasies of speech, food, manners, and landscape. Even the rules of the golf courses differ.

Even those Englishmen who cannot help feeling at home in England and more or less at home in Scotland can usually divest themselves of this feeling when they set foot on the shores of Ireland. If they arrive in the morning the mountains of Wicklow rise into the distant sky, strange as the Alps themselves—no Alps in height, but mountains of a loveliness unparalleled. On the quayside the Englishman is in a country of strange voices, and, if he cannot feel that he is abroad till he has handled unfamiliar coins, he may fill his pocket with strange money that is as charming to the eye as any in Europe. He will find the names of the streets printed up, not only in English, but in a language he cannot read, and, if he is a true Englishman, he will suspect that none of the inhabitants can read it either, and draw from this thought delight and consolation.

On the whole, I fancy, Ireland is less well known to the Englishman than France, Italy or Germany. This may be due partly to the fact that the Englishman has hitherto believed that Ireland was a foreign country only in its politics. Yet I have seldom known an Englishman who visited Ireland and who did not come away with the agreeable impression that he had been abroad. Here, too, if he travels to the West, he will find customs and speech as unfamiliar as if he crossed the English Channel, and the face of the country will be strange to him.

The fanatical traveller may complain that the motoring roads have been made too good, and may long for the return of the days when he would have had to rumble over the stones on a "long car" drawn by horses and exposed to the weather. But the good roads have only brought the unfamiliar West nearer while destroying little of its strangeness.

To leave London and to wake up in Donegal, or Mayo, or Galway, or Kerry, is to wake into a dream. One has the same sensation in Skye, and it is impossible to say that in Ireland one will find landscapes lovelier than one will find in Scotland, Wales, or the Lakes. These things are a matter of taste. I confess that the only fault I could find in Scotland, when I visited it, was the vast solitudes through which I sometimes had to travel from one place to another. In Ireland the people are a perpetual part of the landscape, and I cannot feel happy when I am many miles from a human being. On the whole, I prefer a white cottage with the fowl scraping a living from the ground beside the half-door even to a mountain, and in Ireland one gets them both.

I thought, when I first visited Italy, that it was a country in which, wherever one got off the train, one could not make a mistake. I sometimes think the same is true of Ireland from Kinsale Harbour to the Giant's Causeway. Here one can travel back into centuries beyond Cæsar, strangers in time and place, ceasing to regret the slowed-down mobility of man, compensated for our eviction from the age of gold.

Y. Y.

Correspondence

LAW AND PREJUDICE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Lowe's correction of one or two inaccuracies in Professor Laski's review leaves untouched the substance of the latter's criticism, namely, that our judicial bench in the past has exhibited an unconscious bias against working men in litigation concerning their rights whether as Trade Unionists or otherwise. As one who practised at the Bar for thirty years (I enclose my card), I have no hesitation in affirming that there is substantial ground for the complaint which Mr. Laski makes. His criticism is well founded both where the judges were expounding the doctrines of the common law no less than where they were dealing with industrial disputes. As an instance of the former, what better illustration could there be than the infamous doctrine of common employment? This laid down the law that a workman who got a job thereby agreed with his employer to accept the risk of being injured by the negligence of a fellow-workman. To those familiar with industrial life nothing could be more grotesque. Thus the employer was absolved from the common law liability of a master for the tort of his servant. Such an idea was unknown to the ancient common law. It was born in 1837 (when Trade Unions were regarded in law as unlawful combinations). The doctrine was invented by Lord Abinger in *Priestley v. Fowler*, and affirmed by Baron Alderson in 1845 in *Turner v. Mason*. As Professor Kenny puts it in his book on Torts: "Lord Abinger planted it, Baron Alderson watered it, and the Devil gave it increase."

It is difficult to understand Mr. Lowe's complaint that the Lords Justices of Appeal and the Lords of Appeal in Ordinary have stretched the Workmen's Compensation Acts in a pro-workman direction. The scope of the original statute of 1897 was enlarged by later Acts and its language in a few respects amended in order to get over anti-workman points brought out by judges in interpreting the first Act. The function of the appellate benches is to interpret the language of the statutes and to apply it to the ever-varying circumstances of industrial accidents; this they are supposed to do in accordance with recognised canons of construction. All they did in *Clover, Clayton v. Hughes* (which was decided in 1910), was to apply the meaning of the word accident to the facts of a particular case. The workman, while tightening a nut with a spanner, fell dead; he was suffering from heart disease and his death was caused by the rupture of an aneurism. The County Court judge (who has to decide issues of fact) held that the occurrence was an accident within the meaning of the word as interpreted in previously decided cases, and the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords held that he was right. Why was it not an accident in the legal sense? It was as much an accident as the murder of a cashier, a fatal attack upon an Irish schoolmaster by his pupils, or an assault on a stoker by an African fellow-stoker, all of which have been held to be accidents.

Nothing is worse for our judicial bench than to endow the very human beings who adorn it with superhuman qualities. *Priestley v. Fowler* was decided nearly a century ago, and the intervening period has developed in our industrial democracy a much more critical attitude towards our judges than most members of the legal profession have yet realised. Mr. Laski's criticisms are no less wholesome for our judges than satisfying to their working-class critics.

LEX.

THE KENYA LAND COMMITTEE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Kenyatta's letter in your issue of the 28th ult. is disheartening. It is quite unjustifiable to describe the Kenya Land Commission as "consisting of interested people." In my opinion, and in those of others keenly interested in the rights of the natives, and on the face of Sir W. Morris Carter's public record, no better qualified chairman nor one more likely to be impartial could have been named. I believe it to be quite unwarrantable to describe Mr. Hemsted as an "interested" party. With regard to the selection of Captain Wilson I concur in Mr. Wellock's opinion, that the psychological effect on native confidence may be unfavourable. If so, that is, no doubt, a regrettable circumstance.

But the most important point in this business is that, without any direct lead in the Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament, the present British Government has made a new departure in recognising, contrary to their own law and practice as heretofore maintained, that there were natives living on the lands which they have alienated to European settlers who had well-defined rights of property in those lands under native law, and have decided *and promised* to take cognisance of those rights. That is a recognition for which Mr. J. H. Harris, Dr. Norman Leys, I myself, and others have for years been pressing, hitherto ineffectually, in the columns of your journal and elsewhere.

The proceedings of the Commission must be governed by the terms of the reference to it: and it is on that account the more satisfactory that a judge, and a judge who has been long in contact with questions of native law and customs, in Rhodesia, Uganda and Tanganyika, whilst he has no record committing or prejudicing him on questions of Kenya land policy, should have been made the Chairman of the Commission. The Commission are

> to determine the nature and extent of claims asserted by natives *over land alienated to non-natives* and to make recommendations *for the adequate settlement* of such claims, whether by legislation or otherwise, . . . and to examine claims asserted by natives *over land not yet alienated*, and to make recommendations for *the adequate settlement* of such claims.

It is of the first and greatest importance that the Commission shall have proper evidence marshalled and placed before them on behalf of the natives interested, both as to all areas of land to which such claims can apply and as to the native laws in regard to them. It is mischievous and misleading for Mr. Kenyatta to encourage his people to think that if a Commission under a Judge of the High Court were appointed to deal with similar questions in England "no one would take the trouble to appear before it," and to foment their hesitation fully to present their case. He should impress upon them that this is a Commission appointed by the British Government, in accordance with the desire of Parliament to do justice to Africans, and that they have therefore appointed a judge on whose justice they rely to conduct the proceedings, and that this is their first, their best, and may possibly be their only, chance of getting without delay a recognition of what their rights in these lands were, before the passage of time makes it more difficult than it must be, even now, to determine what those rights were when the lands were taken from them.

As to the manner in which the claims, when they have been ascertained on the evidence given, can be "adequately" dealt with—that is manifestly less a judicial than a practical and political question, and in that connection the objections raised in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION to Captain Wilson's appointment on the Commission may well appear, *prima facie* at any rate, more convincing. But there can be no question that the judicial findings of the Commission upon the facts of the case, as established by the evidence which it is the first duty of Mr. Kenyatta and his friends to ensure shall be fully presented, will raise or reopen questions of public policy which must be decided here with the authority of Parliament and will not be determined solely with regard to whatever recommendations the Commissioners may make. The buyers of the stolen properties (of whom it is alleged that Captain Wilson is one) have, in fact, clean and unimpeachable titles from the Crown, and cannot possibly be damnified by the acknowledgment on the part of the "robber" government that it has robbed and now desires to make reparation, asking the Commission to advise it how best this can be done. The iniquities against which complaint has continuously been made can only be redressed by means of the fuller instruction of public opinion in this country. The sittings of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament effected an impressive advance in that instruction, and that advance must be followed up by the further marshalling and presentation of facts through the Land Commission. Mr. Kenyatta and those for whom he speaks will do the best for themselves by devoting all the courage and energy possible to presenting that evidence. OLIVIER.

Old Hall, Ramsden.

THE WORLD TRAGEDY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Although the world crisis fills many pages of financial and political literature from day to day, it may be doubted if a true idea of the fifteen-year tragedy—for such it is—can be gained by eyes which concentrate their gaze on the material facts. Unless our vision is aided by imagination of a poetic order, the perspective must lack the spiritual values which cover a wider range, and are therefore a truer guide than the immediately observable events.

This season's performances of the "Ring" tetralogy at Covent Garden will have supplied many hearers and listeners with a means of enlarging their view. For there, writ large and stripped of unessentials, is presented the ever-recurring story of human insolence, under malign influences, spelling its own doom by the tragic exercise of its own authority. Whatever names are fitted to it, the moral of the myth remains the same; and there is no difficulty in recognising historical events in their allegorical setting. The pathos, in this particular instance, is heightened by the fact that we see depicted on the stage the experiences of the very people who have clothed a story of their own in verse and music of matchless significance and beauty.

As spectators of actual events, we may liken ourselves to an audience which is listening to Wagner's music-drama for the first time, and does not know what form the eventual *dénouement* is to take. Will the irrational elements gain ascendancy for a further period of trial, or will the notes of reason and reconciliation herald the reinstatement of the Golden Rule? And if this last, is it over the charred ruins of the ancient edifice which fills the scene, or from under its still supported roof, that the final tones will reach our ears?

It is because we have arrived at this point in the live drama that we turn to the books and periodicals of the day, and the information given is summed up, as a rule, under four headings—Disarmament, Currency Reform, Tariff Reform, Reparations and War Debts. The following is my personal impression.

(1) From Disarmament not much can be expected until the larger question of tariffs has been settled. Lack of confidence makes nations cling to the security which, they think, only armaments can provide. Given the cessation of economic war, military disarmament would follow of itself. It is the continuance of tariff warfare which is making nations pursue the (biologically) natural process of increasing their protective armature until they bring about their own decline and fall.

(2) Currency reform is too intricate a subject for detailed discussion here, but its importance entitles it to respectful mention. Since the world appears to be not yet ripe for a paper currency based entirely on trust, first-aid measures of "controlled inflation" are being experimented with, chiefly in America. Great as is the importance of the U.S.A. as a pivotal point, the much desired rise in the price-level, which is the *sine qua non* of world-recovery, will hardly be brought about by her single-handed effort. Open-market operations do not, of course, exhaust the possibilities of monetary action. Many minds, for instance, see the way to "more money" over a silver bridge—but on such a question international agreement is unlikely to reached this year. Given the requirement of a metallic guarantee, we hardly need, perhaps, to look beyond gold. But gold, in a manner of speaking, has "misbehaved," and it seems clear that, if it is to serve the world's purpose, it must submit to the controls, as Sir Arthur Salter puts it, of a constitutional monarch, and no longer play the part of tyrant, as happens in the fairy-story, with power to enslave the workers or to amass an irrationally guarded Hoard. The problem is one for those who have the Hoard in charge. We in this country, for obvious reasons, can only speak as lookers-on.

(3) Tariffs, in their origin the fruit of laudable ambitions, have become, in course of time, a sort of Alberich's curse to civilisation. By reducing the volume of trade they bring about bankruptcy and destitution. Concerted action "to secure their substantial

and progressive removal" would be the greatest boon which the world could receive, and yet it seems doubtful if any such scheme will receive attention this year. Political America is opposed to revision, and our own country has complicated the issue by joining in the economic war at a moment when Europe's faith in Protection seemed to be wavering. Tariffs lead to the Twilight of Capitalism and the deterioriation of the moral code just as surely as, in the Myth, Wotan's condonation of the Rheingold robbery leads to the dimming of the old standards of faith. They will bring about their own cure, but at what cost, and in what length of time, only the event can show.

(4) Reparations and war debt payments are on too big a scale to admit of liquidation in a tariff-ridden world. Yet the first are, apart from their scale, a just exaction, and the second an honourable debt which circumstances have rendered inequitably onerous. Some means is required of satisfying the just claims of America and France without plunging the debtor countries into bankruptcy. A fair arrangement might be to give France, in return for forgiveness of the Young annuities, a share (perhaps a preferred share, as has been suggested) in the equity represented by future German prosperity. Appeasement of the rival claims which are at present blocking the way to discussion might possibly be forthcoming on these lines, provided the givers of any equities were safeguarded against the stultification of their trade by adverse tariff legislation. Such a stipulation brings before us at once the ideal, which it needs imagination to see, of more or less universal free trade, or at least of a federation of English-speaking peoples under a single Customs Union. "A poet's dream" whispers a voice across the Atlantic. Yes, neighbour: but your poet, as we set out to say, sometimes sees farther through your brick wall than your statesman or your bank president. REVELSTOKE.

26a Bryanston Square, W.1.

THE IRISH TARIFF

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In your issue of May 28th you state, in referring to the Irish Free State packet tax, that "the wags have it that since every cube of Oxo is wrapped in paper, twopence per cube has been demanded." This is not a jest of the wags. It is the plain unvarnished truth. Two Customs officers spent a day recently counting the lumps of wrapped sugar in a consignment! Wrapped sections of cheese and wrapped sweets are charged 2d. duty on each section, or on each sweet. The Irish Free State is ruled by madmen. T. B. RUDMOSE-BROWN.

Trinity College, Dublin.

O.T.C.s

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In your correspondence columns, and in others not so important, abolition of Public School O.T.C.s has been suggested, argued, proved essential for the good of the schools in particular and the nation in general, and all to no effect. As one of the bored sufferers of this imitation army business who sneakingly sympathise with the League of Nations and feel that their intentions at least are for the best, I have watched all such correspondence with hope which has gradually turned to despair.

If the young blood of the country so earnestly desires another scrap, it is the duty of older and more experienced people to rule their desires along lines of common sense. But the reversal of this situation is prevalent. Youth says, "If this idiotic playing at being soldiers is at all like the real thing, give us peace and rugger." While the people who have presumably been through the Hell that war is outside fiction, those of them, that is, who have become schoolmasters or governors, burble about it being good discipline and the way to get a commission when the next war comes along. Good discipline! No institution at a public school is more mutinously regarded than "corps." And what obedience is shown is simply a terrified submission to loud-voiced and bullying N.C.O.s who rejoice in their opportunity to be kings for a day. The ordinary and rational authority of the school is always upset. School prefects who are too busy with more important examinations to give up their spare time to "Certificate A" are made courtesy lance-corporals, while bumptious fourth-formers shout their way to red sashes and omnipotence.

Again, "This is the way to get a commission." Yes, and if the foolery were taken seriously, it would be the way to get another war. Thank Heaven it is only looked upon by the majority as a joke in very bad taste. Seriously, I, as a member of my school O.T.C., am not writing this with the viewpoint that "corps" is too much like hard work. A stiff Latin prose is hard work, but it leads somewhere. O.T.C. leads nowhere—that is, nowhere good. Pride and efficiency in it lead, for obvious reasons, to belligerence and a combination of snob and bully. There is none of the heroism and mutual trust which a real fight brings out in men and officers. Nor any of that wonderful spirit of sacrifice. There is none of the humour, and there is no kindness. On the other hand, when treated indifferently, as it is by most boys of normal intelligence, the result is as bad for the morale of the school as a half-hearted Rugby XV.

One of my greatest desires is to see a genuine campaign launched in print, and more than print, against this most irritating and harmful side of school life, and if this letter is published I can only hope it will not be entirely wasted in that direction. I hope at any rate that later generations of public schoolboys will find their time more profitably occupied. DAVID G. CLEAGE.

AN ANTHOLOGY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I am collecting an anthology of letters and poems written to children, and should greatly appreciate the loan of these from your readers so that I may enlarge the scope of this work. Any letters or poems lent to me will be cared for and returned as soon as I have copied them. (Miss) EVE KNIGHT.

6 Hamilton Gardens, N.W.8.

FACING-BOTH-WAYS

The charity business is humbug. NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, May 28th.

I UNDERSTAND that anger cold
Aroused by the restrictions
Of mildewed Statutes framed of old
To keep the poor, at least, controlled
By all the dictates manifold
Of Puritan convictions.

I understand what lies behind
The Puritan's objections
To giant "Sweeps," and I can find
Some reasons, cogent to my mind,
For keeping just one day assigned
To quiet and reflection.

Only that race of mixed descent
Move me to murmur "Gammon!"
Who let their conscience out to rent;
Whose ingenuity is spent
In giving God fifteen per cent.
And eighty-five to Mammon.

MACFLECKNOE.

Miscellany

TRAVELLING COMPANIONS

I WAS interested to read the other day of an Englishman who remarked that his chief cause of complaint against his countrymen was their lack of travelling manners. He went on to say that if you spoke to a man in an English train he looked deeply suspicious, but that a Frenchman was only too glad to listen, an Italian very friendly indeed, and a Greek altogether charming.

Now I must say that, although I have found travellers of most other nationalities most delightful companions, I have also found a great many fellow Englishmen equally charming; though possibly in a greater quantity when they are on the Continent and in "crossing the Channel" have performed some rite which mysteriously rids them of much reserve and self-consciousness.

It was when the Orient Express stopped at Montreux that an Englishman got into the carriage in which I was alone. I was rather deeply engrossed in a book, but I did notice the newcomer had a good-tempered face, blue eyes, very "good"-looking luggage, and smelt of soap and water.

Very soon after leaving the station he turned to me with a delightful smile and said simply, "Do you mind if I sing?" And then from Montreux to Paris the air was made sweet with a tenor voice singing old English songs and gay little French airs. The crowd that collected in the corridor made not the least difference to my companion, who regarded them not at all and only stopped to remark "Do you know this one?"

But it was in England, near Reading, that an old labourer got into my carriage, and, after talking of the weather, regarded me fixedly, and, breaking in quite inconsequently on what I was saying, inquired "Is them your own teeth?" Almost ashamed to possess in full something which he so abundantly lacked I said they were. "Well, you look after 'em," he urged. "I lost mine over thirty years ago, and I've never enjoyed a meal so much since."

Australians and Americans I have found to be excellent companions, especially in case of difficulties. When an airplane, in which myself and two Americans, unknown to each other, were flying, had to return to Le Bourget with engine trouble we discussed together our plans. No 'plane could go till the morrow as it was late evening, but it was imperative I should reach London by the early morning. The most helpless official declared it was impossible to refund me my passage money except from the Paris office, which was shut, and without this I had no money to buy a ticket by the midnight train, having spent all but a few shillings after buying my airplane ticket.

The Americans entered into my difficulty in the most whole-hearted manner, and, by pooling our resources, we managed to buy a ticket home for me, and find a bedroom which they could share at an obscure hotel. Then hungrily we regarded the remaining francs and suggested these should be supplemented by singing in the street; happily, however, as we argued what song to start on, we smelt a savoury smell of coffee issuing from a tiny restaurant. It was too much for us, hunger got the better of diffidence and we marched in to strike a bargain of a large omelette and coffee in exchange for all our remaining francs.

It was an Austrian peasant who inquired my nationality in high hopes because he wanted to shake hands with an "Englisher," as he liked them so much, and who expressed the opinion that we should never have fought each other.

In French trains I think I have met with more inconsiderateness than in any other country, and, in common with every traveller who likes some ventilation, have been rendered almost unconscious by a night journey with every window shut and the *chauffage* full on. On one occasion when, in an almost comatose state, I insisted on an inch of open window, a Frenchman, as a protest (having already every available coat, scarf and rug piled upon him), put his newspaper over his head because of the "*courant d'air*"!

Germans are entertaining to watch because of their complete unselfconsciousness and their determination to make themselves as comfortable as possible. I used to have bets, when travelling in Germany with a companion, as to which Germans would take off their boots. One huge fat German, with an enormous ruc sac, went to sleep upon the hat of a very nervous little man before he noticed the calamity. The little man's agitation to see if the sleeper would awake before he must retrieve his hat to get out, and his chagrin at the thought of the flattened state it would be in, were depicted on his face graphically enough for a movie "close-up."

It was a Dutch woman, I think, who removed her shiny black straw hat and revealed a perfectly bald head. With complete *sang froid* she produced a comb from her bag and combed the fringe which was stitched into the front of her hat.

Spanish travelling companions have the most delightful manners. It was in Andalusia that a peasant, hearing me exclaim about the heat and how thirsty I was, opened the door of the train as it ambled on its way and disappeared along the footboard. In a few minutes his face reappeared at the window, a large knife held in his teeth! He climbed into the carriage and emptied his pockets of many golden oranges. Cutting one in half, with a bow and a gesture worthy of the finest court in Europe, he presented it to me, and to-day remains in my mind as the most gallant of travelling companions I ever met.

BERTINE BUXTON.

THE EARLY AND THE LATER WAGNER

THE Wagner festival at Covent Garden this year offers us an opportunity to compare the productions of Wagner as a young man with those of his middle age. I do not use the words "middle age" as an insinuation, for I am quite prepared to substitute the word maturity for them. But maturity does not mean quite the same thing. How do we know when an artist is mature? And is there a specific time in life when all artists become mature whether they wish to or not? I would say that Verdi became mature at about the age of eighty and that *Falstaff* was his only mature work. I do not call *Otello* mature although Verdi was about seventy years old when he composed it. Yet *Otello* has magnificent qualities which *Falstaff* lacks, and no discerning critic could possibly declare that either one was greater than the other. For an artist to have reached maturity does not mean, I would suggest, that all his powers are at their zenith. This latter is one of those unreal conceptions of a fairy tale or dream-world in which we gain without losing, progress steadily from men to gods—the gods having all the qualities of men with their own added.

But in the real world this does not happen. An artist loses as well as gains in his development from immaturity to maturity. The greatest artists are able to make one not exactly content with the loss but acquiesce in it so completely that we would not have it otherwise. There are also artists who do not mature, but merely grow older and more cunning. Amongst these I would place Richard Wagner. Therefore I speak of the works of his youth and those of his middle age. Wagner never became an old man although he was seventy years of age when he died. I think every musician would agree that in *Parsifal* there is no sign of old age or decay of power. Some might find in it the faint signs of an approaching maturity, but I cannot see these signs yet.

The earliest of Wagner's operas that are still regularly performed is *Der Fliegende Holländer*. This was composed in Paris in the years 1840 and 1841 in the most attractive period of Wagner's life when he was only twenty-seven years old. The next opera, *Tannhäuser*, was composed in Dresden three and four years later when he was no longer a poor struggling unknown foreign musician in Paris, but a successful opera-composer and one of the principal conductors of the Dresden Opera House. It would be childish to imagine that sudden prosperity changed Wagner, but what it did was to bring out elements in his character which grew stronger and stronger. The difference between the two operas—to whatever causes we ascribe it—is enormous and almost incredible. In the first place *Der Fliegende Holländer* is the only one of Wagner's operas (excepting *Das Rheingold*, which cannot be separated from the "Ring") in which there is none of his sentimental eroticism. It is the only opera in which the principal male and female characters do not join in one of those interminable Wagnerian love-duets which resemble nothing so much as the serenading of two love-sick cats which are separated from one another by an invisible garden wall. It may be objected that this is not true of Elizabeth in *Tannhäuser*, and those under the spell of Lotte Lehmann's remarkable performance of this part may well be excused for thinking so. But Venus, not Elizabeth, is Tannhäuser's amatory protagonist. The whole point of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* is that Elizabeth is too good to love and that real passion is only to be found in the Venusberg, which we might not unjustly describe as The Cats' Paradise.

But Wagner did not feel like this about Senta when he wrote *Der Fliegende Holländer*. To Senta he has given real character and passion. It is an astonishing thing that in the whole of that superb second act of *Der Fliegende Holländer* there is not one false note struck. The atmosphere is fresh, the feeling strong and direct, the imagination youthful and ardent. The love Senta has for the Dutchman is a love of the heart and the imagination in which there is no disharmony of the senses. That disintegrated and enfeebled sexuality which is really the source of all the later eroticism of Wagner is completely absent. Neither in the duet between Senta and Erik nor in the following duet between her and the Dutchman is there the least trace of this element. The consequence is that for the first and last time Wagner achieves something heroic. The character of Senta is the one wholly sympathetic and attractive woman in all Wagner's operas. I know that this position is commonly given to Brunnhilde, but I would draw attention to the third act of *Siegfried* when Brunnhilde and Siegfried meet face to face for the first time (as Senta meets the Dutchman face to face for the first time in the second act of *Der Fliegende Holländer*) and ask whether this love duet between Siegfried and Brunnhilde really permits an heroic conception of Brunnhilde ? Most people are simply carried away by its force and virtuosity and cannot analyse or are not sensitive to its tone and accent. But under the splendour of Wagner's trappings what we have here is nothing but the Cats' Paradise over again.

Nothing exposes the futility and pedantry of most musical criticisms more than the customary comments on the second act of *Der Fliegende Holländer*, which some critics decry on account of its mixed style. Their ears can detect traces of the Italian *cantilena* here, but they are not sensitive enough to detect how admirably and successfully Wagner blends it with his own personal style. As for perceiving the quality of the melody and understanding its superiority to the melody of *Tannhäuser*, this is quite beyond their scope. Nowhere is Wagner's great dramatic talent more clearly shown than in the general design and execution of the "Dutchman." In spite of the difficulties of stage presentation—which are rarely, if ever, successfully surmounted—everything in this opera "comes off." This is due to the vitality and purity of Wagner's inspiration in this work. It has also another virtue which is a virtue belonging only to youthful work, and this is that nowhere is the execution ahead of the inspiration. What this means to the long-suffering Wagnerian who has his ears humming and his brain reeling with Wagner's later prodigious virtuosity that so abundantly exceeds its matter cannot be adequately described. Every time I hear the operas of Wagner's middle age I marvel at the capacity of this man to build such gigantic edifices out of next to nothing at all. It is almost a new species of creation, for whereas I feel in *Der Fliegende Holländer* an ardent, youthful, imaginative, highly gifted spirit, I feel in the later operas of Wagner nothing but emptiness and decay, a Valhalla of illusion gilded and coloured by the phosphorescence of a genius in decomposition. I wish we had on record the impression of a truthful and sympathetic contemporary who had watched the whole of Wagner's career. Perhaps his wife Minna, who was to some extent musical and who even in the latter days of their separation was always concerned that he should be creating, might have had something enlightening to say. On the other hand, she might have been prejudiced and considered simply that the work he did when with her was the best. We shall have to judge for ourselves between Wagner's early and later work, but I can think of no comparable example of such swift deterioration into middle age without ever achieving maturity. W. J. TURNER.

A FIRESIDE CONVERSATION

THE wood cried out in the fire
With a thin, sad cry.
And I said, Why lamentest thou ?
What dost thou desire ?
The tall blue of the sky,
The green tossing bough,
Bird voices, soft air, warm sun
And the gold-shafted glade ?
These ? These ?

And I saw (and I too made a sound
Like the cry of the wood)
Carved stem and upspringing boughs,
And leaves in a depth profound,
A canopy where I stood
By the South wall of a house.
Roses and lilies, I saw,
White pinks, sweetest of flowers,
Blue violas and pink mallows ;
And I watched the day withdraw
Through the quiet evening hours,
And the flying of swallows.
I held a pink in my hand,
And ah, what else did I hold
As I watched the light from the highest
Tree tops, the sky, the land
Retreat in an ebb of gold,
That I sigh as thou sighest ?

I said, Let us seek consolation.
Let us comfort each other, I said.
Is there not in your ashes, peace ?
Be content to be used, to fulfil
The appointed pattern. Rejoice
In the quick-lapping flame.
But the wood in the fire cried still,
With a thin, sad voice :
And said, It is not the same.

SYLVIA LYND.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

The Rights of Man

MR. DAVID STEWART'S play *The Challenge*, at the Gate Theatre, has for its moving force another of these high-powered, dynamic men who are so determined to meet life three quarters of the way that they seduce every woman they meet after an hour's acquaintance. Adrian Hereford, who sees, desires and obtains Vanessa Beeching during the course of a business deal with her father, is a stock figure of the emancipated drama, but some of the aphorisms which he throws off lightly between tea and dinner are clever and original. Adrian, catching a glimpse of Vanessa as he enters the room, offers Mr. Beeching very advantageous terms if he will accept a partnership in London. The following morning, with ulterior motive, he discloses with startling suddenness that she has become his mistress. But Vanessa, in the course of seeing life, has lost her heart to a man who proclaims that love is a confession of defeat, and in order to protect his sacred right to be promiscuous, she says goodbye to him for ever. Miss Gillian Lind as Vanessa, Mr. Hesketh Pearson as the too-complacent father, and Mr. Alastair Sim as the apostle of desire make from rather absurd premises quite a dramatic situation.

A New Pinero

A Cold June, Sir Arthur Pinero's playlet, presented at the Duchess in Catherine Street under the auspices of the People's National Theatre, might have taken one of several turns. Even tragedy was not outside its scope, while extravaganza, which was never far away, promised another likely opening. June's origins were equally in dispute; for her mother's closest friend on her death-bed—the mother had been a celebrated and notorious beauty—wrote to a number of middle-aged gentlemen, informing each that he was the father of a child. Two of them, a politician and a retired Colonel, rise to their collective responsibility; they rescue June from her boarding school at Bognor, bring her to London and—since June is very pretty—fall to squabbling over the division of her time. But June is cold, June is calculating and hard; and, though both foolish fathers do their best—asking in return only that she shall love them —she runs off in the end with a wicked earl, who has a yacht and other paraphernalia of seduction. . . . That is all; a sad little story—but the dramatist has neither treated it as a farce nor given it an air of cynical verisimilitude. The characters are lightly sketched in; Mr. Hugh Wakefield is extremely diverting as the Colonel, and Miss Betty Stockfeld renders June herself with a chilly abruptness well suited to the part. The effect is of a somewhat acid little parable toned down for the purposes of drawing-room comedy.

A Barmecide Feast

Casanova at the Coliseum has cost a great deal of money, and on that count may command such reverence as is proper to the outsize, whether in skyscrapers, vegetable marrows or finance. In other respects it is infinitely less interesting than any other entertainment of its curious genre that I have seen. Erik Charell has, one suspects, been as much overwhelmed by his costings account as the guileless provincial may be expected to feel when he reads of the gondolas, the hundreds of gorgeous costumes, the lavish sets and the revolving stages. For *Casanova* must stand or fall by its catalogue of paraphernalia, which is hardly once organised into any sort of a composition. The plot and characterisation, when they emerge, are from the very rag-bag of nineteenth-century sentimentality. Casanova is actually made to remark in face of one temptation: "No, no! You are his. Go to him"—an injustice to that adventurer's memory which nothing can excuse.

Odd Honours

The tone of *The Cheque Mate* (Kingsway) as set by the banal melodramatics of the first act is strident as the song of the cockatoo. How many stage heroines have offered themselves to their rich suitors in order to save the honour of their dissolute young brothers? But this particular well-worn play ends soon after the beginning of Act II, when we learn that John Mallory is far too noble to take advantage of a lady whom he loves and that he has brought her out to his country house just to teach her a lesson. The lady, however, to his dismay, for honour's sake insists on the letter of the bond. Meanwhile the young brother has also been taught a lesson, or says he has, and there are further opportunities for melodrama, and the puncturing thereof, before curtain-fall. If you can tolerate a rather unusual degree of preposterousness in plot and character, you may be amused at intervals through the evening by Miss Ruby Miller, who plays entirely for her moments, and by Mr. Ronald Ward as the regrettable young brother.

You Never Can Tell

At the Embassy Mr. Vivian Tidmarsh, with the help of a cleverly contrived setting, reveals the dramas that are being enacted *Behind the Blinds* simultaneously in four different flats. The misleading comment of the charladies on the stairs is the only connecting link between the stories of the prostitute and the thief, the henpecked husband, the parents whose son has been killed, and the crooks who discover a body in a stolen trunk. Mr. Tidmarsh might possibly maintain that his central idea is the falseness of appearance. A supposed wife-beater is in reality a hen-pecked husband; an apparently respectable young lady is a prostitute; some amiable gentlemen up the passage are criminals; the shiftiness of a quiet couple is only the outward mark of bereavement. Three of the playlets would make first-rate music-hall sketches. The skilful method of their combination keeps the audience in an agreeable suspense. With the exceptions of Mr. Eric Berry and Miss Anne Bolt, who have been lamentably amateurish throughout the season, the Embassy company is admirable. Mr. Hugh E. Wright, on this occasion the worm who turned, is one of the most talented and versatile actors on the London stage.

Lacquer

At the Redfern Gallery, in addition to Orovida's popular Javaneseries and animal etchings, Miss Hester Radford is showing two screens and a set of panels in lacquer. It is a medium of specious attraction, with the smooth, cool surface as tempting to the touch as to the eye. Yet there is something temerarious in practising it after the Chinese masters; and how can the modern artist hope to vie with the patine that successive centuries have set like a bloom upon the classic pieces? The full value of Miss Radford's work can only be judged fairly by a future generation; its vintage is still unmellow. But when the last wild-flowers of England are imprisoned in botanical gardens, and there dying out like the bison in reservations, the mechanical inhabitants of the land may well turn to these panels and sigh. For Miss Radford has woven the plants of wood and hedgerow into ordered yet intricate design, making an admirable picture out of their tangled clusters, and one to which her medium is especially appropriate. For it gives the sheen of blossom and foliage, and the iridescence of a crowded patch, with a nearer truth than oils, and at the same time allows a clearer definition of shape and colour. *The Wood's Edge*, where a few plants evoke a world of remoteness and mystery, *Autumn*, with its glowing abundance, *Woodland Flowers*, a haze of silver and blue, and the screen, *Wild Columbine*, are the most successful pieces. *Dandelions* is rather dangerously near "art emblazonry," and the screen *South Wales* reduces what should be an imposing design to toy-like prettiness; it is a false simplification. But in the happier flower-pieces there is a profound and individual reading of nature, and their particular magic will only be increased when time has worked upon their surface.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:

Friday, June 3rd—
 Sir Arthur J. Thomson on "Claude Bernard," B.B.C., 7.30.

Sunday, June 5th—
 "M," Cambridge Theatre Cinema.
 "Beginner's Luck," Duchess.
 "The Scion," Faculty.

Monday, June 6th—
 C. K. Ogden on "Jeremy Bentham," University College, 5.30.
 The Camargo Ballet, Savoy.
 "Crazy Month," Palladium.

Tuesday, June 7th—
 Mock Trial on "Undue Domesticity," London School of Economics, 5.30.
 "Hocus Pocus," Garrick.

Wednesday, June 8th—
 A. J. Lynch, First of six lectures on Education, Woburn House, Upper Woburn Place, 5.30.
 "The Vinegar Tree," St. James.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

WHEN Samuel Pepys saw *A Midsummer Night's Dream* he dismissed it as the most insipid, ridiculous play he ever saw in his life. I do not suppose there has been since so summary a verdict on any of Shakespeare's plays, except from Mr. Bernard Shaw, whose name by some unfortunate mischance is absent from Mr. Augustus Ralli's monumental exposition and anthology of Shakespearean criticism, *A History of Shakespearean Criticism* (Oxford University Press, 2 vols., £2 2s.). His book is an endeavour "to follow the course of aesthetic opinion on Shakespeare from his own time to the end of 1925 in England, France and Germany." Mr. Ralli does more and less than he promises. He gives us a good many American criticisms, though he has missed Sidney Lanier and Quincy Adams; he includes the Danish critic, Georg Brandes, reckoning him with the Germans. Unfortunately, however, he omits Tolstoy. The exclusion of Tolstoy and Bernard Shaw means that this work contains no representative selection from that realistic, common-sense, "de-bunking" criticism of Shakespeare which distinguished the end of the last century; and has, in its turn, been the origin of a re-orientation of Shakespearean appreciation which leaves the dramatist's reputation far higher than it was before Shaw savaged so many of the comedies and Tolstoy expressed his pious horror at the monstrous imbecilities of *King Lear*. It may seem ungracious to complain of a book so plentiful as Mr. Ralli's; but his task must have been so arduous, his success on the whole is so great, that it is a pity he did not undertake the labour which would make his volumes as complete as they are indispensable.

* * *

The vastness of Mr. Ralli's task can best be illustrated by a few facts. The volumes contain over 1,130 pages of about 530 words. There are over 400 several articles, arranged chronologically in forty-two chapters. More than 320 critics are examined and their views analysed. So far as I have tested Mr. Ralli, his power to make a full and fair précis of an author is remarkable; and his own comments on the critical opinions he summarises are often shrewd and imaginative. His style is at times a little awkward; and he tends, perhaps because he is continually distilling other authors' words, to be a shade too allusive in his own expositions. Still one can only admire the independence and judgment of an author who, after so deep an absorption in the opinions of others, can still form his own. Mr. Ralli does not approach a play of Shakespeare's with the freedom, not to say the licentiousness of Mr. Samuel Pepys; and he makes no effort to imitate the roguery of Mr. Bernard Shaw. He is, however, by no means a mere idolater of Shakespeare, and is plainly aware of the disadvantages of that hagiological movement that did not end until the poet of the Mermaid had become the divine William, and the boy whose woodnotes secured the unaffected admiration of the young Milton had been transfigured into that rather inappropriate bird, the Swan of Avon.

* * *

In looking through these volumes I am once more struck by the fact that nearly all adverse criticism of Shakespeare has been based either on his natural carelessness or on his neglect or ignorance of certain rules which are not, except pedantically, applicable to his theatre. The difference between "classic" and "romantic" cannot be stated in a sentence; but as seen by European criticism under the tutelage of Boileau it does almost amount to this—that a classic author is one who imposes a form on his work, while a romantic is one who allows his work to make its own form. It was the unwillingness of certain critics to admit that you could have a tragedy which did not keep the unities of time and place although obedient to an inner unity of the spirit, that resulted in the ruin of classic drama. The facts were too much for the pedants. It was obvious to any sensitive reader that there were plays which by ignoring the rules gained something which obedience to the rules could not give. Stendhal, for instance, states one great advantage possessed by the Shakespearean drama and not by the drama of the formal unities:

> That a tragedy of Racine's may only occupy the last thirty-six hours of an action eliminates development of passion. It interests and impresses us to see Othello loving in the first act and killing his wife in the fifth. Such a change within thirty-six hours would be absurd. Macbeth, an honourable man in the beginning is seduced by his wife to murder his king and benefactor and develops into a bloodthirsty monster. Nothing in poetry can surpass these changes in the heart which both move and instruct.

The amount of action in Shakespeare's plays and the amount of comedy and farce for years obscured from many how essentially interior a drama his is. Compared to the real world of Shakespeare's characters, the world inhabited by Juliet, by Hamlet, by Falstaff, by Desdemona, by Timon, by Lear and Cordelia, by Lady Macbeth, by Prospero, the world of the early plays of Maeterlinck is coarse and actual. There is little overt talk about the soul and spiritual things in Shakespeare's plays, precisely because each person is an immortal soul; and each demonstrates the fact in the same way as it is demonstrated by men and women of our acquaintance. Ultimately the quarrel between, say, Lamb and Mr. Bernard Shaw or between Coleridge and Tolstoy about Shakespeare's supremacy would turn out to be philosophical, theological rather than aesthetic.

* * *

It is this fact that the Shakespearean drama is always a drama of the spirit that renders the neglect of the unities unimportant. Yet there are still critics who will insist on judging Shakespeare as if he were a plain, realistic dramatist. The life of the body is so vigorous and vital that it obscures for them the truth that the drama is happening elsewhere. Mr. Ralli does not quote him, but I seem to remember that Mr. St. John Ervine, in writing about *The Merchant of Venice*, administered to that piece of magic, malice, and moonlight a tart and severe scolding which was only ineffective because of its pure irrelevance. It is a tribute to Shakespeare's mastery in the creation of character that so many of his most intelligent critics fail to realise that he often wrote a play round a theme, a vision or a mood, and took hastily and carelessly his people to fit his world of ideas: then in his generous exuberance and creative power he makes these human conveniences so alive that his readers begin to judge them as though they were figures in a pedantic history, not souls in a symbolic vision. The gravest fault of most Shakespearean criticism from Samuel Johnson to Dover Wilson is that the critics are apt to treat Shakespeare as a dramatist rather than a poet. Unless one starts with the conviction that Shakespeare is primarily and essentially a poet, one is sure to go wrong. Far too many of the critics summarised by Mr. Ralli fall into the category of that man of whom Prince Frederico speaks in Calderon's *The Painter of His Own Dishonour*:

> He who far off beholds another dancing,
> Even one who dances best, and all the time,
> Hears not the music he dances to,
> Thinks him a madman, apprehending not
> The law that rules his else eccentric action.
> So he that's in himself insensible
> Of love's sweet influence, misjudges him
> Who moves according to love's melody:
> And knowing not that all these sighs and tears,
> Ejaculations, and impatiences,
> Are necessary changes of a measure
> Which the divine musician plays, may call
> The lover crazy; which he would not do
> Did he within his own heart hear the tune
> Played by the great musician of the world.

The best critics of Shakespeare are the poets, and those who faithfully believe that, in spite of any evidence to the contrary, the poets are the true guardians of reality.

RICHARD SUNNE.

NEW NOVELS

Dictator. By GEORGE SLOCOMBE. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

Little Red Horses. By G. B. STERN. Heinemann. 8s. 6d.

Royal Flush. By MARGARET IRWIN. Chatto and Windus. 8s. 6d.

Bright Skin. By JULIA PETERKIN. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

Ship in the Night. By ROBERT NEUMANN. Peter Davies. 7s. 6d.

The story of a dynamic personality, a man ambitious for power, a born leader; one who begins as an anarchist, working secretly for the liberation of the peoples of the world, but eventually deserts his cause and becomes a Fascist dictator, ruthless, efficient, cynically histrionic—how easily might such a story be told with mere intelligence, how easily it might begin and end as a piece of bright topical journalism! Now it is true that Mr. Slocombe's book is interesting as a comment on current affairs, and that it throws a light—the searchlight of imagination—on recent history; but that is by no means the purpose of its being, and if Mr. Slocombe ever imagined that it was (which is possible but unlikely), he will now, seeing what an excellent piece of fiction he has produced, confess himself to have been mistaken. To analyse the virtue that makes a particular novel worth while is an ungrateful task, but one that cannot always be avoided. *Dictator*, then, has this double appeal: it is a good story, rich in suspense and romantic colour; and it is a highly suggestive piece of dramatic psychology. Hannibal of Thalia, the revolutionary turned dictator, is (like all dictators and most revolutionaries) first of all an egoist; and his political dreams, whether or not they conduce to his *outward* personal aggrandisement, are seen as the expression, the imperfect sublimation, of a colossal vanity—a vanity which, when frustrated, becomes a consuming and infectious fever. Given this passion to the nth, there is no theoretical limit to the power a man may gain over the lives of his fellows; and it would seem that mankind in the mass, if handled with the necessary cunning, is only too ready to enjoy by proxy, in the person of their tyrant, the freedom and power denied by him to themselves. Mr. Slocombe points no moral: he is too good an artist for that; nor would it be fair to assert that any moral is implied. But, reading his story, one is driven irresistibly to the depressing conclusion that the power to govern efficiently cannot, by the nature of things, co-exist with that pure benevolence, that disinterestedness, that personal humility without which no man is morally fit for the responsibility of government. This justifies the anarchist's conviction that all government is bad government, though it does not invalidate the corollary that at the moment, and until mankind, racially and individually, emerges from its spiritual infancy, bad government is better on the whole than no government at all. The world is fated to be ruled by ambitious egoists—in a word, by bounders: the most we can hope is that they may be in the future, as they have often been in the past, comparatively good-natured bounders. It is surely significant that when any considerable ruler has displayed in his use of power the honesty and kindliness that we take for granted in our next-door neighbour, he has been acclaimed in all the history-books as a kind of archangel. Mr. Slocombe's Hannibal is not one of these: he possesses gifts that enable him to dispense with the humdrum virtues that we look for in the ordinary man. He has personal magnetism, a superb belief in himself, singleness of purpose, and limitless audacity. The story of his rise and fall is admirably told. Mr. Slocombe's writing has that individual flavour that distinguishes the first-rate from the merely competent.

Miss Stern's admirable novel might almost have borne the sub-title: "How not to bring up children." Halcyon Day, her central figure, was most unfortunate in (successively) her mother, her kind friends in America, her father, her aunt. It was her mother (who is dead before the book opens) who insisted that she should be called Halcyon. Her father, a naval officer, is in the China seas when Mrs. Day dies; and Halcyon, who is living with relations in New York and attended by a soulful governess, celebrates her bereavement in a series of childish poems. These are published; all the sentimentalists and stunt-merchants in the Northern States hasten to acclaim the author as a genius and a prodigy; and the poor child is trained to live *en prince*, in an atmosphere of mawkish and hysterical adulation. Not even the best sort of child—and Halcyon is fundamentally a very good sort indeed—could do anything but become odious under such ministrations as these. Joanna Rosenfeld, her devoted governess,

> had been a devotee of theosophy, Buddhism, Christian Science, William Morris, New Thought, Spiritualism, Joanna Southcott and the Second Advent, and could quote whatever suited her from all or any of these; an indolent skimming of cream from at least twenty-two honest religions, any of which would separately have rejected her synthetic rearrangement, and disclaimed her as a proselyte. She had even blandly filched a few Talmudic and Messianic prophecies and adjurations from her husband's religion. She believed in the writing on the Pyramids, and in other Apocryphal statements. . . . She did not forget auras and astral planes and the acquisition of grace through immobility and the development of Pratyahara. Utopia and Beautility and the pilgrimage of old souls came into the tangle; and how, when Evelina had first brought her and Halcyon together, she had recognised at once that in another incarnation they had had something to say to each other, and had left it unsaid, but it was being said now in deeper, fuller tones . . .

From this quotation it will be seen that Miss Stern's method has the amplitude that goes with gusto. She elaborates; she embroiders; she gives full rein to her inventiveness. She is, however, by no means verbose: indeed, this is one of the very few long novels (there are nearly 600 pages of it) that one does not wish shorter. There is gusto, too, in the characterisation; a comic exuberance which one enjoys even when it leads to a statement that is flatly incredible. Nothing will persuade me that Aunt Cathie said of her brother, the elderly Captain Day: "There! Bobsie has one of his coldie-woldies again!" Yet I am grateful to the author for veiling Aunt Cathie's sentimentality, essentially so pitiful and revolting, in a fantasy that enables one to laugh at it. Captain Day is a hearty stupid fellow who not only, and very naturally, deplores the imbecile environment in which his daughter is growing up, but regards poetry itself a waste of time, and imagination as unhealthy. He wants above all things to see Halcyon romping with other children of her age: his desire to see her romp, remarks the author, was in danger of becoming a morbid obsession. He therefore tears her from the embraces of Mrs. Rosenfeld and delivers her into the care of his sister, Aunt Madge. Where children are concerned, Aunt Madge is the opposite kind of fool, believing it her duty to impose on her niece a standardised childish behaviour. At their first meeting Halcyon thinks: "Perhaps she's nicer with her hat off."

> But Aunt Madge never took her hat off; at least, never during the day. It was an efficient hat, and she was an efficient woman, so that they formed a potent alliance of efficiency. Aunt Madge gave an impression that she had a wigwam somewhere in the garden or in the village, and every now and then came into the house to sit down at her writing-desk, still in her hat, and dash off a business-like note About The Eggs, or about seeing So-and-So to arrange a committee meeting over that right-of-way. She sat down to lunch, in a preoccupied way, in her hat, with a veil hanging down behind it. . . . And she sat in the cab all the way home from the station still talking to Hal's father about Hal, as though Hal were not there; saying that what the child needed was to knock about with other children, and she would soon find her own level.

There we have Aunt Madge. It is evident that the unfortunate Halcyon Day has nothing to hope for from *her*. The child's plight is painful in the extreme; she has merely been transferred from one madhouse to another. But at this point, by happy chance, she meets a kindred spirit in the person of a child-actor, Eden Herring; and the rest of the book concerns the relationship between these two, their obstinate resolve to be together, and the vain efforts of their elders to keep them apart. Miss Stern's presentation of these children is exquisitely right, a triumph of clear perception and delicate art; and the candour and freshness of the book as a whole give continual pleasure in the reading, and dwell on in the memory, like music, when the reading is done.

Miss Margaret Irwin, in *Royal Flush*, has written something that is neither an historical novel nor a plain reconstruction of history. If the first, she would have allowed herself more licence for invention; if the second, she would have been more scrupulous to avoid invention. In the ordinary historical novel no one, so far as my reading goes, has ever solved the difficulty of imparting an equal degree of "reality" to both fictitious and historical personages, unless, perhaps, it were Maurice Hewlett. And it has always been the real people who were less real than the novelist's own creatures: Kings and Cardinals come strutting upon the stage, carefully in character, very self-conscious, and all palpably pretenders. But Miss Irwin has the wit and the art to avoid this disaster by the apparently simple expedient of

dispensing with fictitious characters altogether, and of taking us, without tiresome preamble, into the homes and hearts of the Stuarts and the Bourbons, showing Louis Treize and his brother Philippe d'Orleans and Minette his cousin as children together, and their mothers as two sad and somewhat querulous widows not essentially different from any Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Brown of similar temperament. She differs notably from the mere imitators of Lytton Strachey (a master unfortunate in his disciples) in that she freely and frankly, instead of occasionally and as it were by stealth, invents conversations. The result is a brilliant and fascinating book. The publishers are justified in their claim that it gives us "the life of a royal family whose story is so rich and varied that it falls naturally into the form of a modern novel." Miss Irwin knows her people intimately, and treats them, from first to last, as fellow human beings. She has invented little or nothing, I take it, in the way of plot; and for this reason the book is more episodical than would be acceptable in a novel that was pure fiction. It should not, indeed, be approached as one approaches fiction; but rather with the reflection: "This, or something very much like it, really happened." A reflection which invests the record with a peculiar poignancy.

Bright Skin **concerns a community of negroes, and is full of dialect conversation which, though it makes for slow reading, has a decided charm and is well worth the trouble of mastering.** ***Skip in the Night,*** **translated from the German, is a series of stories narrated to each other by people on board ship.**

GERALD BULLETT.

SCIENCE AND METAPHYSICS

Philosophical Aspects of Modern Science. By C. E. M. JOAD. Allen and Unwin. 10s. 6d.

Without doubt one of the most interesting phenomena in the intellectual world of our time is the open advocacy of idealist metaphysics by some of the most important of our physicists. And at least as interesting as the philosophical questions themselves is the historical question as to why this development has taken place. The Marxian answer, frequently hinted at in the recent writings of Professor Hogben and Bertrand Russell, is that bourgeois theology, toppling on the verge of economic collapse and shaken to its foundations by the spread of Marxism, is driven to seek support from the obscurity of modern physics. But it is too much to ask us to believe that Professor Eddington or Sir James Jeans has any conscious desire to sabotage Socialism by subtly supporting theology, and if the desire is unconscious, historical materialism, when seen at such close quarters, takes on a remarkably mystical air. In Mr. Joad's opinion, the extreme abstractness of modern physics and mathematics make them in some sense an avenue of approach to the realm of value. "Modern physics," he says, "constitutes one of the most important of those preliminary studies of weighing, counting and measuring, which Plato specified as 'propaedeutic' to the knowledge of value, and if Plato is right, it would seem natural to suppose that the emotion of reverence and wonder which the scientist is often said to feel may be an emotion felt for value." This emotion, then, is the reason for the metaphysical bent of modern science.

It may, however, be questioned how far Mr. Joad is right in suggesting that science is any more metaphysical now than it was in the past. No doubt the metaphysical opinions of scientific workers are listened to with much more respect now than they were in the past, but this is only because on every hand the dominance of scientific technique over our lives confers the position of priest, prophet, and philosopher more and more on the scientific worker, whether he wants it or not. It follows that scientific workers with metaphysical interests have much more encouragement to become vocal now than in the past. Now, as Mr. Joad hints elsewhere in his book, so long as scientific hypotheses remain on a concrete level, never straying far from concrete phenomena, there arise no temptations for the scientific worker to stray far from a naive realism, such as was commonly found in the last century. But with the mathematisation of science, with the coming of the pure mathematical physicist who never does any experimental work at all but operates wholly on the data acquired by others, there comes also a temptation to emphasise the activity of the experient subject in perception, since the abstract mathematical schemes of physics are so obviously the result of conceptual activity. In this way physicists and astronomers interested in metaphysics have discovered the advantages of idealism. To the philosophers these advantages had been familiar for centuries, but the corresponding disadvantages had been familiar too. It was with some perplexity, therefore, that the philosophers now observed metaphysical idealism being put forward by scientific workers as if it were some laboratory product, some unescapable conclusion of the latest experimental analysis. Moreover, the more metaphysical and literary ability a man of science has, the more likely he is to be a man of wide culture, and hence to be sympathetic with, if not actually attached to, one of the traditional organisations in which religious experience finds outward expression. Inevitably, therefore, the classical association between idealism and theology has led to the simultaneous advocacy by distinguished scientific men of two entirely separate things, metaphysical idealism and the validity of religion. It would seem to be purely due to reasons of this sort that no scientific worker has so far given us an atheistic idealism of the type of McTaggart's.

Mr. Joad's book, then, provides us with a valuable criticism of these contemporary movements. He devotes considerable space to a discussion of the opinions of Professor Eddington and Sir James Jeans, in which, with his philosophical training, he is easily able to show us a mass of inconsistencies. With commendable accuracy he dissects their metaphysics and deposits each portion in its appropriate box, here a piece of Hegel, there a piece of Kant, here a large chunk of purest Berkeley. The reader's only qualm arises from the fact that it seems too easy. One wonders whether Professor Eddington ever intended his philosophical statements to be taken so seriously—that very literary quality which makes the Eddingtonian corpus so charming, faintly suggests that the metaphysics is, as it were, thrown off in passing, Eddington's real interests being the physics of the insides of stars, and the inner light of men. Can it be a mere accident that Professor Eddington never answers the criticisms of professional philosophers?

As for the Neutral Monism of Bertrand Russell, Mr. Joad attacks that very spiritedly too, but as might be expected, the going is not so good, and his opponent is not so convincingly destroyed. In later chapters he gives us an account of his own opinions concerning scientific method and the relations between science, art and religion. This involves a good deal of discussion of the writings of other philosophers and scientific workers (Millikan, Planck, Sullivan, Needham, Haldane, etc.). Mr. Joad divides them into two principal groups, (*a*) those who believe that "sense experience, scientific knowledge, and mystical consciousness are three different ways of knowing a reality which is fundamentally the same, and (*b*) those who believe there is one way of knowing what are in effect three different orders or realms of reality." Believing that the first of these theories too much resembles the abandoned faculty psychology and suffers

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from unsurmountable difficulties, Mr. Joad argues in favour of the second. It is impossible in the space of a short review to describe his position in detail, but it deserves the attention of all those who are following the thought of our times. Whether, however, he will succeed in convincing the majority of philosophically minded scientific workers, whose general position has long been, and will probably long remain, essentially Kantian, we must take leave to doubt. JOSEPH NEEDHAM.

THE LAST YEARS OF QUEEN VICTORIA

The Letters of Queen Victoria: Third Series, VOL. III, 1886–1901. Murray. £1 5s.

Although the last of the nine volumes of Queen Victoria's letters covers the period of Omdurman and the South African War, it is the most peaceful and the least dramatic of the series. For during these last years of her life the Queen's will did not clash with that of her Ministers. The Liberal Party, split over Home Rule, plays a very inconspicuous role, while Mr. Gladstone puts in no more than a death-bed appearance. The dominant figures are Lord Salisbury and Mr. Chamberlain, and in their hands she had no doubt that the honour of England was safe. Lord Salisbury's unruffled common sense, his shrewdness, his innate conservatism, his contempt for the mob, his firm but cautious handling of great Powers, and his less cautious firmness in dealing with weak ones—all these made him a Minister after the Queen's own heart. There was no longer any need for the Queen to point out that "giving up anything one has is always a bad thing." England had not been in a giving-up mood since Majuba. Almost every month the Queen had the satisfaction of knowing that some new territory had been added to her Empire.

Foreign Powers were, of course, a nuisance. The French behaved very badly over Fashoda. After all, they were hopelessly outnumbered there by Lord Kitchener's troops and should have departed quietly without laying a preposterous claim to the territory on the plea that they got there first. As for Germany, William II kept writing the most ridiculous letters, explaining in flamboyant language how distressed he was that Lord Salisbury did not like him and how much he wanted an alliance with England. Mr. Chamberlain was known to be in favour of a close understanding, and in the period just after the Queen's death England did, in fact, very nearly become an ally of Germany instead of joining the Triple Entente. But the German belief that England could never make up her differences with France, and William's total lack of discretion, common sense and manners were always obstacles to the project. The Queen, Lord Salisbury and the Prince of Wales all agreed that William was a trial, and we find the Queen on several occasions writing letters of a polite but firm nature putting her grandson most decisively in his place. The politeness was necessary because the grandson was, after all, Emperor of Germany, but no letter from the Queen ever failed to remind the Emperor that he was also a grandson. As for the Russians, the Queen had the closest ties with the Tsar, but she was often distressed about Russian foreign policy. Lord Salisbury exactly summarised the situation in a letter to her: "The Russian Government is perfidious, but pleasant in negotiation. On the whole the results at which it arrives are not worse than the results of the German Emperor's unreasoning caprice, or the violent popular passions by which France is driven."

In all these affairs of high international politics the Queen did everything she could—short of running any risk of giving anything up—to promote peace. To send Sir Theodore Martin on a special mission to each of the big daily papers in order to persuade them to adopt a conciliatory tone towards Germany was an unusual extension of the royal function. In imperial matters her attitude was quite different. The notion that the Boers had a case against England never even entered her head. She did not actually approve of the Jameson raid, but she was all for leniency towards the raiders, and, without any sign of misgiving, notes various conversations with Mr. Chamberlain in which he explained that though war would, of course, be regrettable and might still be avoided, it was, in fact, very probable. Her letters show no more excitement about the outbreak of the South African War than they do about any of the various frontier wars that occurred periodically in her reign. These were rebellious and unreasonable people who had to be put down. That was all. Though obviously astonished at the easy successes of the Boers she was quite undaunted by them. She sent out chocolates to the troops, discussed the propriety of superseding General Buller, deplored the loss of British lives, decorated the survivors and visited the wounded. She died in the consciousness that a vast new territory had been added to her Empire. She was untroubled by any imaginative questioning about its future or about the stability of the social and international system which, on the surface at least, had so greatly prospered through her long reign.

A pattern runs through these letters, a pattern such as an historical dramatist might vainly strive to achieve. A letter from Mr. Chamberlain discussing the obduracy of Kruger: one from the Kaiser complaining—jealousy is not an easy passion to hide—that we had treated him badly, in Samoa for instance, "a stupid island which is a hairpin to England compared with the thousands of square miles she is annexing right and left unopposed every year." Then the preparations for the Jubilee, or some astonishingly elaborate birthday gift. Then a letter from the Queen urging that the new Viceroy, Mr. Curzon, must "not be guided by the *snobbish* and vulgar overbearing and offensive behaviour of many of our Civil and Political Agents, if we are to go on peacefully and happily in India." Then an entry in her diary mourning the death of one of her innumerable relatives or retainers—death is the most frequent of all themes in these pages. Then another letter about the bandmasters whom the Queen wished to make commissioned officers—these bandmasters crop up with delicious regularity between October 1898, when the Queen's desire is first put forward, and March 1900, when all the delays of the War Office and Treasury have been finally overcome and Lieutenant Zavertal, the first commissioned bandmaster, writes to say that he "can hardly realise" that the commission is really his. And then France misbehaves or the Empress of Austria is stabbed, and we begin the cycle again with variations: South Africa, Germany, another birthday, another death, India, the bandmasters, South Africa again, and so on until the Queen slips quietly out of the picture. There are occasional surprises—dashes of unexpected colour which serve to vary the pattern. Who, for instance, would have expected to find Lord Rosebery writing to say that he had purchased "a locket surmounted by the British Crown" and asking as a great favour "if your Majesty would deign to send a tiny lock of your hair to put in it"? If we knew what answer, if any, was sent to this presumptuous request, we should feel that the story of the Queen's life was now complete.

TECHNIQUE AND EMOTION

An Introduction to French Painting. By ALAN CLUTTON-BROCK. Chapman and Hall. 8s. 6d.

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HARRAP

his preferences. To Claude he is indulgent—"Even the faults of Claude, his timid drawing and his often banal forms, seem necessary to his poetic illustration." He gives Watteau credit for improving the machine—"It was certainly a direct consequence of Watteau's ingenuity that the art of painting was henceforth much easier, a nuisance which since his time has steadily increased." Chardin is decidedly his favourite; he speaks of him as "that consummate artist Chardin, without any doubt, I should say, the greatest painter that Europe produced in the eighteenth century." It is not surprising, therefore, that with the moderns he finds something imperfect in Delacroix, and dismisses Millet as weak, though by his own canons Boudin seems rather too harshly judged.

Another of his verdicts is that "Courbet was quite unable to connect these large crowds of figures in an adequate manner." To Mr. Rothenstein *The Burial at Ornans* is "a miraculous, a unique manifestation of imaginative power and insight and a sense of the tragic." For Mr. Rothenstein deals with a different and more humanistic aspect of art. To him it is "one of the means by which man adapts himself to his surroundings," and his book deals with the conflict between the romantic and classical wills which form its background in Europe in the nineteenth century. One could wish that his account of the struggle had been more continuous, instead of in the form of rather disjointed essays. It reads too much like the rough draft of a larger work, but it is full enough of good things to make one hope that Mr. Rothenstein will ultimately amplify it in completer form. He deals particularly well with Constable, Bonington, Daumier and Courbet, and it is cheering to find Théodore Rousseau and Millet handled with fairness.

He seeks the spirit behind an artist's work, and courageously, at the present epoch of criticism, gives merit to a picture for its emotional content. It is not, indeed, improbable that his book may be a pioneer work in a newer and more comprehensive critical school, linking art with the wider interests of civilisation instead of confining its appreciation to a sterile and abstract æstheticism. At any rate these essays in re-valuation, along with Mr. Clutton-Brock's more specialised history, have a permanent value quite apart from any momentary interest in modern French painting.

T. W. EARP.

AN IRISH GRIEVANCE

The Bright Temptation. By AUSTIN CLARKE. Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d.

It is a curious reflection that the one outstanding, all-encompassing grievance which Ireland has against England, a worse grievance than the Wool Trade or the Welsh Horse or the English language, is one of which she has never complained. Briefly, it is this: that the English, the most politically minded of all nations, has infected us with the virus of politics, so that an island not indeed of saints and scholars, but of farmers and storytellers and fighting men, has become an island of politicians, and what was once "the last belated disciple of Plato in the West" now holds with Aristotle that man is a political animal rather than a reasonable soul. Irishmen have indeed written excellently upon politics, yet Swift and Burke are read not for their politics but for their prose. The secret philosophy of the race, its real contribution to political wisdom, is summed in a single couplet from *The Traveller*:

How small of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure:

and if it be objected that this was written not by Goldsmith but by Dr. Johnson as a stiffening of buckram for his young friend's poem, it does but show the disruptive efficacy of an Irishman's company and conversation on the most finely crusted English Tory.

It is this pestilent infection which has produced the hallucination that it is less important to live than to be governed and which made one romantic young flute of an Irishman denounce Æ (who of all his generation had the vision of the pastoral Golden Age and left to himself would have brought it back again), protesting that he had taken the stones of the altar of Irish liberty and built them into a cowhouse: a fine phrase, for which much might have been forgiven him if instead of cowhouse he had said byre, but the English language as well as the English political virus had infected him into forgetting both his common sense and his native idiom. Moreover it is to be observed that the nation, once infected, has brought to this perverse and barren exercise an ingenuity and enterprise equal to that which it once applied to the designs of Byzantine hieratic art. The Irish Parliament was an English institution, foisted upon us in the late Middle Ages, yet this did not hinder it being fought for in later years with extreme ardour and pertinacity; and the spectacle of the Dublin jurists unravelling the ramifications and constitutional implications of an oath is not dissimilar to that of Tabach the scribe in the final chapter of *The Bright Temptation.* He was guiding a dragon's tail through the thousand convolutions and intertwinings of an initial that was to diminish for ever the illuminators of Clonard and Clonmacnoise, and through a vexatious interruption lost the tip of it amid the intricacies of its own coils, and though for hours he sought patiently and with increasing prayer among those multitudes of interwoven lines he could not find it: so that the final irruption of the Danes came rather as a relief than an intensifying of his perplexities.

To read *The Bright Temptation* is to know the foolishness of this present world. It is a revelation like that which came to Ardan, the poor scholar in the cave, when his love came to him out of the shadows with her cloak about her, as Fand to her lover from the light of lakes, and the cloak slipped from her shoulders, and he saw the lost treasure of Ireland. Yet not wholly lost, for at least the countryside is still the same, and if it seems in this book still more magical, it is because we see it through fourteen centuries, wizard blue like a familiar landscape seen through an arrowslit in a six foot wall. For this Ireland is still the Ireland of all plain men, not bewitched and sicklied over into the grievous woman of the later days, but the lap of wild earth of the poets that John O'Daly translated and had printed in Dublin in 1857: they have never had their due, the Irish translators of the eighteen fifties:

I have heard sweeter music than thy music, [O Patrick],
  Though greatly thou praisest the clerics,
The song of the blackbird of Letter Lee
  The very sweet thrush of Gleann-a-sgeail,
The seagull's scream on Iorrus yonder,
  Or the murmur of the streams about Slialhmis.

Indeed, when one comes to think of it, it may be that the curse has been a blessing, that this barren passion for names and forms and legalities which has kept the country arguing has been her salvation from prosperity. For prosperity brings development and the speculative builder and a band on the pier, and there are few of these in Ireland, except near the coast which looks across to England; elsewhere there is no place in Europe where two may walk all day in such companionable solitude, in places as secret yet as near as the world under the sharp blossom of the gorse "where only the bees dare to go," as quiet and as aware as if Diarmid and Grania had but now left the valley.

Fifteen years ago in Dublin Mr. Austin Clarke published his first poem, *The Vengeance of Finn*, a book that one's friends borrowed and did not return, and that went out of print too rapidly for replacing, so that those were lucky who had good memories for verse. He had chosen for it the great romance that runs like a forest brook through the Irish Middle Ages, taking it at the moment when romance turns tragedy and the water quickens to the leap. Yet the secret of his poem, as of the older mediæval Irish prose, was not in the dramatic sorrow of the end, but the long wandering by sunlight and moonlight and starlight. That wandering still haunts his imagination: and in this, his first novel, he has sent two younger and more guileless lovers on the same roads. Prose is a more obstinate medium for witchcraft than verse, and he may never again come so near absolute beauty as in these lines of his earliest work:

Thou, thy beauty garners their lost dreams
Even as lulled waters the green gleams
Of willows, making them more beautiful.

Yet it is his singular triumph that he has won the victories of one art with the weapons of the other. Again and again one is brought up short with the shock of memory and surprise that is the effect of poetry and not of prose, yet his rhythm is the rhythm of prose. He draws no magic circle, unless indeed the ring of firelight in which the lovers sat, "less than the reach of a holy crook," but his plain words have spells in them, of valleys "when the sunlight grows drowsier at evening and will not stir for all the wings that cluster among bushes," rocks where "clerics that have been boat-wrecked on their way to the Western Paradise cower over a few twigs that the very crows had forgotten, and turn their hoods against the strange sky." The truth is that the magic is not in the form of words, but in the spirit of the maker of them: and that spirit is "eager as light that brings back all at day and is ever delighted."

HELEN WADDELL.

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MOZART THE LITTLE

Mozart. By SACHEVERELL SITWELL. Peter Davies. 5s.

Mr. Sitwell has cut the ground from under one possible standpoint of a critic reviewing his book on Mozart by stating: "that it is written by a complete and uninitiated amateur must be his apology to one half of the audience (the general public) and his justification to the other half of it."

The merits of a rather short monograph on one of the world's greatest musicians written by such an amateur can only be of a special kind. Mr. Sitwell has not given us a biography of the composer; he has not had the space; even the very sketchy summary of Mozart's life which he supplies is of doubtful value because it is an outline which omits all the depth and colour which made Mozart's relatively short life a very full and complete one. If we merely consider the fact that Mozart died at the age of thirty-six—an age at which most creative artists have only just begun to have a conscious use of their powers—we shall be likely to endorse Mr. Sitwell's statement: "It was death's most dreadful achievement," and to think, as he does, that we were deprived by this premature death of what would have been Mozart's greatest works. It may be so, but to most musicians to-day the works which we have of Mozart's are great enough. They offer an inexhaustible field of study and one may assert without fear of contradiction from any musician of outstanding capacity that there is in them far more of what is problematical and difficult of access than in any of the most "advanced" of contemporary music.

But Mr. Sitwell's view of the death of Mozart corresponds to his attitude towards his life. He has a far too narrow conception of the character of Mozart's genius and is always trying to force it into a category which he describes as "Rococo." For him, Mozart is "Rococo" and Bach is "Baroque" and he concludes: "Baroque is ever on a greater scale than the Rococo." Elsewhere he harps on Mozart's good taste and elegance, and he shares the illusion common in certain circles that in Mozart we find the perfect musical expression of the well-bred refinement of the eighteenth century salon. It is the duty of every critic who is aware of the historical facts to reveal the falsity of this conclusion. We cannot expect that every writer upon Mozart should be able to discern directly from his music how utterly it differs from the real salon music and rococo music of the eighteenth century; but we can expect him to be aware of the fact that the aristocratic music lovers of Vienna did not share Mr. Sitwell's opinion of Mozart. They actually preferred the music of other composers whose names are to-day unknown except to specialists. And they disliked Mozart's music, and let him die in poverty, precisely because they thought it extravagant, wild, complicated and obscure. When Mr. Sitwell is describing his own impressions he often writes delightfully, but we wish that he had not attempted to compress the original and dateless genius of Mozart into a narrow frame of the eighteenth century.

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ROUTLEDGE

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SIX VIEWS OF THE CRISIS

The World's Economic Crisis and the Way of Escape. By SIR ARTHUR SALTER, SIR JOSIAH STAMP, J. MAYNARD KEYNES, SIR BASIL BLACKETT, HENRY CLAY, and SIR W. H. BEVERIDGE. Allen and Unwin. 4s. 6d.

There was once a Ministry of All the Talents; and here we have, at any rate, an advisory committee of nearly all the talents to tell us what to do about the world crisis. Or, rather, we have nearly all the people who are most likely to be able to give us good advice about the means of keeping the capitalist system in being, and restoring it, as far as it can be restored, to normal health. For that is the burden of these six lectures, delivered under the auspices of the Halley Stewart Foundation. There is no professed Socialist—much less a professed Communist—among them, to tell us that the right course is not to restore Capitalism at all, but to set manfully to work to create a different economic system in its place. Consequently, there is no fundamental criticism of capitalist institutions, which are for the most part taken for granted, and even treated as axiomatic. Sir William Beveridge does indeed remind us that the choice between Capitalism and Socialism is the fundamental choice before us, and that the worst and least workable course may be so to mingle the two as to get the best of neither; but, having said this, he returns at once to a consideration of the conditions of restoring Capitalism and does not discuss the practicability of the Socialist alternative. Sir Arthur Salter also refers to this fundamental choice, but only to make the same return. One is tempted to wonder what a lecture by Stalin would look like if it were inserted into this series, or what he would have made of the job if he, instead of Sir William Beveridge, had been invited to sum up.

Even within their limitations the six lecturers do not always agree. Sir Basil Blackett rather shocks Sir William Beveridge by coming out as a thorough-going advocate of national economic planning as well as of currency management in the fullest sense. Professor Henry Clay is by far the most individualist of the six, and comes near to advocating *laisser-faire* as the chief remedy, as against Sir Basil Blackett's far-reaching policy of State Capitalism. Sir Arthur Salter and Mr. Keynes are far more international in their outlook than the others; and they both lay great stress on world monetary conditions, whereas Professor Clay plainly thinks that monetary deflation has been a far less potent cause of the crisis than the unbalanced growth of production.

Still, certain agreements emerge. All the lecturers, except perhaps Professor Clay, are evidently in favour of a managed monetary system, based preferably on close international collaboration. They all want Reparations and War Debts to be cancelled or drastically scaled down; and they all want to see tariffs greatly reduced—even if, like Sir Josiah Stamp, they are for the moment in favour of a British tariff. They all want to see some sort of price stabilisation—though it is doubtful if any two of them would agree about the precise kind of stabilisation that is needed. And, finally and most obviously, they all agree that it is going to be very difficult to create the conditions which will bring about a restoration of capitalist prosperity.

Difficult indeed it is, because above all it involves persuading national Governments and public opinion in the various countries to adopt a world outlook, and to refrain, in the interests of the world's future, from attempting to snatch temporary short-run advantages. But the pressure upon Governments to do just this thing is extraordinarily strong, and grows stronger month by month as the difficulties of each national system grow more acute because of the increasing troubles brought about by their previous measures. Even if these six lecturers—and other men

Another
Coloured
Question!

Walking through Covent Garden market the other morning we came across a Nigger trying to sell some quack concoction to robustly healthy porters. He was saying very earnestly that he couldn't tell them *why* it cured the malady, but it *did!*

But we were not interested in the Nigger's medicine; we were looking at his clothes. Why do Niggers always buy clothes several sizes too large or too small for themselves? Although this Nigger's clothes were obviously new, his brown tweed jacket gaped an inch and a half at the nape, his grey flannel trousers were short by at least three inches, his stiff collar was far too high, his brown shoes were roomy enough for another two or three pairs of socks!

As we left our Nigger, still declaiming the wonders of his medicine, we thought what a fine-looking fellow we might have made of him. We visualised him in a quiet yet distinctive grey worsted suit—the tone most carefully chosen—with a greyish tie, white collar and grey shirt. Black shoes, but not patents, and restrained but not over-dull socks.

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of equal eminence in the other leading countries—could produce a concerted and agreed plan of action for bringing the crisis to an end, the task of getting the world's Governments to adopt it would be formidable enough. But if this book represents the highest common factor of agreement among the British experts, the task becomes infinitely harder still. For in truth no clear or concerted policy emerges from these six lectures, full as they are of unquestionable diagnoses and of excellent piecemeal suggestion. A much nearer approach to agreement, and to the best possible policy for getting the capitalist world again to work, would be likely to emerge if Professor Clay, Sir William Beveridge, and perhaps Sir Josiah Stamp were told to go away, and Sir Arthur Salter, Mr. Keynes, and Sir Basil Blackett left to work out more concretely the ideas embodied in their three lectures. For these three could, from the British angle, devise as good a plan for making Capitalism work as anyone is likely to devise. Whether it would stand any chance of acceptance when they put it forward is, of course, quite another matter.

SHORTER NOTICES

The Stock Exchange Official Intelligence. Edited by the Secretary of Share and Loan Dept. of the Stock Exchange. Spottiswoode, Ballantyne. 60s.

Once again we commend this guide as an admirable example of a competently arranged and indexed reference book. It contains facts and figures relating not only to securities dealt in on the Exchanges, but to many which are not. As in previous issues, separate sections deal with the finances of the Dominions, Colonies and British Municipalities and Counties, and a special chapter is devoted to the important legal decisions of 1931 under the Companies Acts. Practical information on such subjects as Income Tax, Stamp Duties and Trustee Investments are given in the concluding portion. The printing and binding are excellent.

Eminent Authorities on China. By RONALD HALL. Allen and Unwin. 8s. 6d.

The authorities—first-hand observers—whose views on China are here collected, and edited, have been arranged by Mr. Hall in three classes, realists, optimists and pessimists; and the reader having listened to them is left to decide for himself which, if any, has got to the root of the matter. The views expressed, and even the facts presented, are often flatly contradictory, depending as they do upon the writers' points of view and social contacts. Mr. Hall believes that much of the misunderstanding here disclosed is due to the fact that the temperaments of the Northern and Southern peoples of China are seriously dissimilar, and that in many areas, owing to migrations, the peoples, being mixed, make confusion worse confounded. The book is very readable and describes the China known to Europeans from the early days of the Canton factories to the collapse of the Manchu dynasty.

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The Sociology of City Life. By NILES CARPENTER. Longmans. 16s.

In his study of city life as it affects the city-dweller, Professor Carpenter is mainly concerned with that life as it is observed in America, and naturally many of the problems discussed, especially those which relate to large unassimilated alien populations, are unknown in the old World. Nevertheless, he casts his net wide and many of his illustrations and a good proportion of his statistics are derived from British and Continental sources, so that his broad conclusions have a considerable interest for students of the moral and physical effects of city life generally. The Professor discusses the growth of urban centres from the earliest times and advances some interesting but far from conclusive reasons for the breakdown of the Roman Empire, which he suggests may have been due to the urbanisation of areas unfitted for such experiments. The book is a useful contribution to the study of civic problems as they press upon us to-day.

The Escapes of Captain O'Brien, R.N., 1804–1808. Lane. 7s. 6d.

This "Journey," anything but sentimental—Captain O'Brien, made prisoner during the Napoleonic Wars, crossed in his escapes France and Southern Germany three times on foot from end to end—has something even of Sterne in its circumstantial inconsequence and in the author's turn for the unexpected. Of historical value—we see a land under military despotism, with hardship on every hand—the book is a treasure in the portrait it gives, despite the laconics of the Senior Service, of the author. His endurance and the ready wit which served him in many contretemps make him a worthy member of that Escaping Club, the doings of which will be of interest so long as man proclaims his love of freedom, however theoretical. Quite dispassionately he notes it is his fifth day of living upon cabbage stalks, that with the energy born of a despair which is almost a hope he kept running all night "with very little intermission." The horrors of Bitche, where he was confined after two unsuccessful escapes, are vividly and tersely described.

Expatriates. By M. A. DORMIE. Appleton. 7s. 6d.

G. Bruce Warner was a wealthy American manufacturer who had been born in a small Lancashire village. Wishing to do something for its inhabitants, he decides to transplant some of them, complete with white-headed parson, to Warnerville, U.S.A., and instals them in a model village to exercise their "English craftsmanship." This they do to such effect that they are overwhelmed with orders, and are quickly forced to adopt mechanical methods; the cobbler instals machines, the herbalist becomes the proud possessor of a soda fountain, and the aged potter is seduced by Hollywood. To complete G. Bruce Warner's disappointment at the failure of his plan, his daughter falls in love with the potter's son. Mr. Dormie has had a good idea, but has hardly made the most of it, and his characters tend to be types rather than real people, probably because they have been made to fit into a preconceived plot instead of being integral parts of it. *Expatriates* emphasises, however, the gulf which exists between the old craftsmanship and the new machines, even if it advances no suggestions for bridging the gap.

Down Under: An Australian Odyssey. By R. W. Thompson. Duckworth. 12s. 6d.

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does any business become a routine but it is dead for him. He described himself accurately in *Argentine Interlude* as a rolling stone. *Down Under* represents the next and more ambitious roll, between 1926 and 1930, a period that coincides with the crisis in Australian affairs. Working on sheep stations in the bush, in engineering, insurance and gramophone businesses in Sydney, Mr. Thompson rubbed up against industrial and political mismanagements, and each rub exasperated him, providing rich material for his scorn. In particular, the spectacle of Australia refusing to face the coming economic crash by chirping confidently of her wool and wheat, raises his impatient wrath. Mr. Thompson spiritedly puts as much of himself as of Australia into his picture, his defiant efforts to work out a theoretical and practical plan of life forming a parallel theme to his descriptions of the country's adolescence.

Nicholas of Cusa. By HENRY BETT. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

Mr. Bett has a new subject and, as his bulging footnotes testify, it deserves a longer book than this small volume. Nicholas of Cusa has found no previous biographer here, partly for the reason that he fits into no water-tight period. He died in 1464, his feet being in Neo-Platonic mediævalism and his head in the Renaissance. Cusanus' career is significant of this. He made at the Council of Basle a highly important contribution to the Conciliar Movement; he took part in an attempt to unite the Eastern and Western Churches just before the fall of Constantinople; he promoted reforms in pre-Reformation Germany; he discovered twelve lost plays of Plautus and was the first to doubt the authenticity of the Isidorian Decretals and suspected that of the Pseudo-Dionysius. Mr. Bett's book contains a useful account of his life, but the major and valuable portion of his volume is concerned with Cusanus' philosophy. We still await an analysis by an English Duhem of his scientific writings. For not only was Cusanus "obsessed with that thought of the Absolute which has been the preoccupation of all Idealistic philosophy since Kant," but in his dynamics he was a precursor of Copernicus and Kepler, and in mathematics he found a kind of certitude possible nowhere else.

Thirty Years in the Golden North. By JAN WELZL. Allen and Unwin. 10s. 6d.

Polar exploration has yielded accounts in plenty, but the title of this volume is a clue to the uncommonness of its contents. A polar settler has little immediate sense of contact with the world beyond his own white area, nor has he, as a rule, the inclination or ability to write. Jan Welzl, a Czech labourer, who made his way to the North to seek his fortune, is no exception. His story has been collected bit by bit and pieced together by two journalists. While preserving Welzl's own simplicity and naive wonder they have also been obliged to retain his vagueness with regard to exact localities. Apart from this, both detail and vividness are in this account of a polar trader's life among the Eskimos. Welzl describes the terrific detonations of the sea as it freezes for an arctic winter, the horrors of frostbite and the peril of long journeys across cracking ice. He also writes on the habits and character of the cave-dwelling Eskimos—a crude, early-developing and short-lived people with utilitarian callousness regarding human life. White traders, whalers, gold seekers and polar vagrants find their place in this community that boasts some degree of elementary organisation and even justice. Welzl himself, working up a position as trader, mail-runner and doctor, to be at last elected "chief and supreme judge" of New Siberia, is a figure of courage and endurance, credulous by nature, crafty and resourceful by experience.

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GRAMOPHONE NOTES

BERLIOZ AND FAURÉ.

THE late Charles Ricketts once made the sweeping assertion that all good English artists were foreigners or at least had a strong admixture of foreign blood. His own French blood may have lent a slight air of *parti-pris* to his statement, but there is no denying its superficial truth. In music, at least, our two greatest names since the seventeenth century have been Handel and Delius, who are both in the category of "honorary Englishmen." But we no more think of placing them outside the English tradition than the French think of treating Van Gogh and Picasso as traditional French painters.

England is an easy country for a foreign artist to adopt because its own artists, however spotless their passport, have in their work a certain eclecticism of style which prevents it ever attaining the rigid insularity of so much French art. We can speak of Purcell and Handel together because one was an Englishman influenced by abroad and the other a foreigner influenced by England. The wholesome English custom of treating all artists as aliens has resulted in a broader and more varied tradition than obtains in countries where art is officially recognised and where the most revolutionary artist has his weather eye on academic recognition. French art—and in particular French music—is far more closely and intimately national than English. It is at once its strength and weakness. The logical French spirit has produced the most magnificent schools of painting and literature, but it can hardly be said to have produced a great school of composers. The most typical French composers are *petits-maîtres* like Fauré and Chabrier. The two great French composers of the last 150 years are undoubtedly Berlioz and Debussy, both of whom are freaks in the French tradition. Both were "literary" composers, and both looked to other countries, particularly England, for literary inspiration. Most of Berlioz's greatest works have titles drawn from Shakespeare or Byron, and although Debussy's exoticism usually took a Spanish form one should remember *The Blessed Damozel*, the many piano pieces with English titles (even *Minstrels* was inspired by Eastbourne!) and the fact that among the works that he had set his mind on completing were *King Lear*, *The Fall of the House of Ussher*, *The Devil in the Belfry*, and a version of the Tristram legend.

I think it is justifiable to class Berlioz and Debussy as freaks in the French tradition, for there is no French composer between the two who showed anything like the mentality of either. Even the romanticism of Villiers de L'Isle Adam provoked no musical counterpart, and there is no *Axel* symphony to set beside *Harold* or *Faust*. The later nineteenth century is best represented by the quiet and scholastic figure of Gabriel Fauré, whose violin and piano sonata in A Major Op. 13 has been issued by H.M.V. played by Cortot and Thibaud (three 12in. DB. 1080–82). Fauré's music is little played and little appreciated in England (though many people must surely remember the exquisite Pavane which was presented by Diaghileff with Massine's choreography as *Las Meñinas*). It is distinguished by what Professor Dent has well described as "an extreme closeness of harmonic reasoning." Academic in the best sense of the word, its neat and logical construction, its fine sensibility and complete avoidance of emotional over-emphasis, represent the French spirit in music at its best. It has, in fact, all the qualities that César Franck's music so conspicuously lacks. The A Major sonata, though it can hardly be described as a great or compelling work, is delightful

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The problem of American RECOGNITION FOR RUSSIA is discussed in the issue of May 18.

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for those who can appreciate a work written in emotional half-tones. The slow movement has an almost Proustian melancholy, and one might almost believe that this was the famous sonata by Vinteuil were one not credibly informed that this composer represented an intellectual pot-pourri on the author's part of themes from Saint-Saëns, César Franck and *Lohengrin*! Performance and recording are impeccable.

To go from the Fauré Sonata to Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust* is to go from a pleasant conversationalist at his best to a great orator rather below his usual form. The *Damnation of Faust* is for some reason the most accepted of Berlioz's works, perhaps because it is a little lacking in those peculiarly individual qualities which make so strong an appeal to the real Berlioz enthusiasts (of whom I am unashamedly one). Although the most dramatic of orchestral writers Berlioz was curiously unsuccessful at setting dramatic words, and this work has neither the dignity of his "straight" choral works nor the vividness of his purely orchestral works. It has been produced by H.M.V. with a few cuts on ten double-sided records (in album—C. 2399–2408. Sung in French. The Pasdeloup Orchestra under Piero Coppola. The Saint-Gervais Choir). Apart from one or two of the vocal numbers, the high-lights of this work are undoubtedly provided by the well-known orchestral movements, and it must be admitted that the present recording of these is by no means up to the standard of brilliance that we have often heard in this country under Sir Hamilton Harty. The singers are adequate (the best of them being Panzera as Mephistopheles, whose diction is excellent), but they are placed too near the microphone, with the result that our interest is distracted from the often more vital orchestral texture. Nearly all recordings make this mistake, the engineers still seem to imagine that any piece of vocal writing can be treated as if it was a rousing number at a smoking concert.

The album is worth getting for certain scenes which are only heard when the whole work is performed, but it was a great mistake to omit the Pandemonium at the end, one of Berlioz's finest bits of diabolism. After all, if we buy a work entitled the *Damnation of Faust* we expect to see him thoroughly damned. The magnificent *Benvenuto Cellini* overture is finer both intrinsically and as a performance (H.M.V., two 12in., D. 2060–1, with *Les Troyens à Carthage* overture on the fourth side). Most works which fall between two periods have a rather unsatisfactory transitional quality, but *Benvenuto Cellini* has all the dignity and solidity of the finest classical overtures combined with a buoyancy of rhythm and brilliance of orchestration which we do not find again until the finest works of Strauss. The performance and recording are excellent, and one regrets that the conductor, M. Pierre Monteux, should appear so rarely in England.

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Problem 10

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Six teams take part in an Association Football competition: the Britons, the Saxons, the Normans, the Danes, the Angles, and the Jutes. The competition lasts for five rounds, each team playing each of the others once. Two points are awarded for a win and one for a draw. Where points are equal, positions in the competition table depend on goal average, i.e., upon the ratio borne by the number of goals that a team has scored to the number of goals scored against it.

In the first-round matches every team scores. Two teams each score two goals.

At the end of the first round the positions in the table are: (1) Britons; (2) Normans; (3) Danes; (4) Jutes; (5) Angles; (6) Saxons.

At the end of the second round the Normans have four points and the Danes have two.

At the end of the third round the Angles have three points.

At the end of the fourth round the Jutes have one point.

At the end of the fifth round the Britons have eight points and the Danes have four points.

Sixteen goals in all are scored in the competition.

Construct the final competition table, showing the number of matches won, drawn, or lost by each team and goals scored for and against.

Problem 8

PUSCHOVSKI

This was really a comparatively simple cipher, though a number of solvers failed to discover the clue. If the last digit of each (alleged) page number is removed, we get:

16, 9, 3, 3, 1, 4, 9, 12, 12, 25, and so on.

Taking the 16th, 9th, 3rd, 3rd, etc., letters of the alphabet we then get the message:

PICCADILLY CIRCUS NINE TO-NIGHT.

Once this solution is discovered, its correctness is, of course, beyond question, as the odds against such a message occurring fortuitously are incalculable.

Several solvers were puzzled by the word ATARAXIA. Its inclusion had no special significance. It is a word given in, at any rate, some dictionaries, meaning "freedom from disturbance in mind."

Points awarded to:
Dr. L. C. Adam, F. G. Adamson, D. Barber, Dr. C. O. S. B. Brooke, Crooked Dean, G. B. Courtier, T. W. Chaundy, V. J. D., Initio, A. J., F. L. Jones, H. Moore, R. H. Millward, F. S. M., F. Morrell, Mercutio, Macbeth, W. Oldham, J. L. Priston, T. Procter, M. Ross, Roscoe, Seiss, W. A. Whitehouse.

Additional point: Problem 7.—Henry Vine.

Competitors for the Quarterly Prize are reminded that solutions (on **foolscap**, and with names and addresses clearly shown) must reach this office, addressed to *Caliban*, not later than midday on the **following** Thursday. Consideration, however, will be given to competitors residing abroad; every effort will be made to enable them to participate.

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Uprights

1. He "twanged the lyre" (yes, that's the right expression!);
He twanged it with a will,
2. So furnishing the capped and gowned profession
With "sounds that echo still."

Lights

1. "I will be good"—was that her aspiration?
(So'd we, if we knew how).
2. Land's out of sight! The wrath of a harassed nation
Is all that's left us now.
3. He modelled. And, if pickle followed after,
A scourge for all 'twould be.
4. His black beard shook beneath Homeric laughter;
His like we shall not see.
5. Their "warrior queen" well earned the poet's pity,
In days now past and gone.
6. It ought to be, no doubt, a mighty city—
Yet it has not got on.

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

BY TOREADOR

AMERICAN BARGAIN COUNTER—CO-OPERATIVE TRUSTS—FIXED TRUSTS—GREAT SCOTT! GREAT UNIVERSAL STORES.

IT has always been my conviction that Mr. Gordon Selfridge will offer American industrial stocks in his bargain basement before the slump is over. Tuesday's session on the New York Stock Exchange brought the day of bargains very near. The values of stocks being already low, the declines recorded in Tuesday's debacle were as portentous as any recorded in the days of the great crash of 1929. Thus, Bethlehem Steel fell by 24 per cent., Socony-Vacuum Oil by 21 per cent., and United Gas Improvement by 15 per cent. The dismal history of Wall Street since 1929 may be seen in tabular form as follows:

DOW JONES INDICES.

	Boom-Slump.		Revival-Reaction.		Hope-Despair.		Suicide.
	16 Sept., 1929.	2 Jan., 1930.	5 Feb., 1930.	6 Dec., 1930.	23 Feb., 1931.	17 Dec., 1931.	31 May, 1932.
20 Rails ..	182.7	144.7	161.3	91.6	111.7	31.4	14.3
30 Industrials	373.4	244.2	272.7	157.6	193.9	73.8	44.7

The cause of Tuesday's debacle was the scare about being forced off the gold standard (as if this could be regarded as an evil!), the fear of inflation (as if this could be construed as a bear point for equity shares!) and the disgust over the perversity of the Senate (as if politicians could be expected to be anything but perverse!). Nevertheless, the Budget will somehow be balanced, and a less jaundiced view will sometime be taken of the future of the United States. The Federal buying of U.S. Government securities at the rate of $100 millions a week has so far had little effect except to reduce the indebtedness of the Member Banks to the Federal Reserve. Now that Member Bank indebtedness has been reduced to normal, we may expect better results. That they will continue to accumulate funds with the Federal Reserve as excess reserves upon which no interest is paid is inconceivable. The accruing deficit in the Federal Budget has so far been preventing Federal Reserve purchases of Government securities from assisting the bond market, but as soon as the Budget is balanced we may see better days in Wall Street.

* * *

Investment trust depreciation is a delicate matter and it is impossible to say what ought and what ought not to be expected of an investment trust according to its age. It is true that the pre-war investment trusts have shown smaller depreciations than the post-war companies, but we find an old-established company like the Investment Trust Corporation (registered in 1888) disclosing a depreciation of 23½ per cent. on its investments. Among the post-war companies anything up to 35 per cent. may be regarded as a normal depreciation. But when we come to a depreciation of 50 per cent. and over we get into the range of the abnormal—at any rate for companies which have operated on recognised investment trust principles. This compels me to return to the subject of the Co-operative Trusts, although I am loath to do so. The First Co-operative Trust as at January 31st, 1932, disclosed a depreciation of 52 per cent. and the Second Co-operative Investment Trust as at March 31st, 1932, a depreciation of 53 per cent.—in each case disregarding reserves, which are, of course, invested in the business. Mr. Emil Davies, in his speech to the shareholders of the First Co-operative on March 21st last, agreed that the depreciation was unpleasant, and, "if it had to be regarded as permanent, would be still more unpleasant." Does Mr. Davies really believe that he can recover the 50 per cent. of the shareholders' capital that has been lost? I have no desire to rake up past history, but I am bound to say that the endeavour to maintain dividends of 7 per cent. from the outset necessitated investment in high-yielding speculative securities, some of which must now be written off as irretrievably lost. When this dividend policy was corrected in 1931 and the proportion of bonds enlarged at the expense of the proportion of ordinary shares, the chances of further depreciation were probably increased, for additions were made to the holding of foreign bonds. Surely the time has come for facts to be faced and shareholders to be warned. It is surprising to hear that a special meeting has been called by the Second Co-operative Investment Trust to sanction the conversion of the present issue of 5 per cent. withdrawable preference shares into new 4 per cent. withdrawable preference shares. As the yield on British Government stocks has not yet fallen below 4 per cent., Mr. Emil Davies would appear to be under a complete delusion as to the credit which his trusts enjoy with the investing public.

The First British Fixed Trust is again advertising the attractions of its new system of investment. The principle of a Fixed Trust is to spread a certain sum of money over a selected number of equity stocks and leave it there. The portfolio of the Trust is built up by the successive acquisition of a number of strictly identical groups of securities, each group being called a unit. In the case of the First British Fixed Trust the unit consists of 1,280 ordinary shares from twenty-four leading British companies. The managers of the Fixed Trust, having bought the first unit, deposit the securities with a trustee, who then issues against them certificates for sub-units available in convenient denominations. The purchaser of the certificates acquires an interest in the securities comprising the unit. As the certificates are sold successive units are bought and deposited with the trustee. The price at which the certificates are sold is based on the current market prices of the deposited securities, plus the usual Stock Exchange commissions. The First British Fixed Trust is engaging in its frankness. It assumes: (*a*) that a master mind has chosen the original unit of deposited securities, and (*b*) that the managers have no intelligence, for they cannot function except to decide when to sell a share in certain contingencies. The unit of the First British Fixed Trust is as good a collection of ordinary shares as you will normally find. It includes the ordinary shares of Anglo-Persian Oil, Babcock and Wilcox, Boots' Pure Drug, British-American Tobacco, British Insulated Cables, Callender's Cable, J. and P. Coats, Commercial Union Assurance, County of London Electric, Courtaulds, Furness, Withy, General Electric, Arthur Guinness, Harrods, Imperial Tobacco, J. Lyons and Co., Midland Counties Electric, Rolls-Royce, Savoy Hotel, Schweppes, Shell Transport, Staveley Coal and Iron, Watney, Coombe, Reid, and Yorkshire Electric Power. Personally, I would not hold at the present time Anglo-Persian Oil, Babcock and Wilcox, Commercial Union, Savoy Hotel, Shell Transport or Watney, Coombe, Reid, and I should be in no hurry to buy the rest. Moreover, I could buy these shares more cheaply by buying directly on the market.

* * *

The story of Great Universal Stores, Ltd., so impressed the speculative investor that he subscribed in July last £300,000 in the form of 7 per cent. £1 preference shares at par and £400,000 in the form of 5s. ordinary shares at 20s. with the utmost gusto. The prospects appeared, from a reading of the prospectus, to be altogether rosy. The directors were Mr. Abraham Harris Rose, Mr. George Rose, Mr. Jack Perceval Rose, Mr. Nathan Rose, and Mr. Harry Rose. The business was, in fact, started by the Rose family and H.M. Post Office, the company selling as merchants a large assortment of household goods in response to orders obtained through the post. The goods were despatched from warehouses and the expense of retail shops was eliminated. Everything about the Company rose. The profits rose—from £110,374 in 1929–30 to £213,434 in 1929–30 and to £410,767 in 1930–31. The dividends rose from £3 6s. 8d. per £1 share to £13 6s. 8d. in the same period. The capital rose from £15,000 to £600,000 since March 31st, 1931. This happened because (a) the whole of the dividends paid for 1930–31 (£200,000) less £28,832 were reinvested and capitalised; (b) £313,832 surplus of assets over liabilities at March 31st, 1931, and £100,000 being part of the profit earned since March 31st, 1931, were capitalised and issued as bonus shares to shareholders. Up to the date of the prospectus (July, 1931), which offered part of the capital to the public, the 5s. ordinary shares at a premium of 300 per cent., everything was "roses, roses, all the way." Now comes the report for the year ending March, 1932, which shows a net profit, before depreciation and tax, of £267,389, as compared with £410,766 in the previous year. No explanation is given of this surprising drop in profits, but there must have been a lot of discussion *sub rosa* between the directors and the sponsors to the issue, because the directors have voluntarily paid into the Company's banking account funds sufficient for the payment of a bonus of 1s. 6d. per ordinary share. It is apparently the generous desire of the directors that the ordinary shareholders should receive a dividend equal to what they would have received if £100,000 of the profits earned since March, 1931, had not been capitalised. This did not apparently please the market, for the 5s. ordinary shares dropped from 15s. to 8s. before recovering to 10s. The highest price for the ordinary shares quoted this year was 23s. 6d. The Stock Exchange Committee might make an inquiry into the origin of the recent selling of these ordinary shares.

COMPANY MEETING

EAGLE, STAR & BRITISH DOMINIONS INSURANCE CO., LTD.

SATISFACTORY YEAR'S OPERATIONS

Presiding at the General Meeting of the Eagle, Star and British Dominions Insurance Company, Limited, held on May 27th in London, Sir Edward Mountain, Bart., J.P. (the Chairman), in moving the adoption of the Report and Accounts, said: Certain definite facts had emerged during this world crisis that affected their business and to which he would like to call attention. Firstly, it was proved that the British insurance companies are financially the soundest in the world and are passing through this critical period without any distress. Secondly, investment in Insurance shares in well-established companies had been proved to be among the soundest of investments, as it has always been in the past. Thirdly, it had emphasised the great advantages of life and endowment insurance, whereby there is no depreciation on the assured's investment, the whole of which risk has to be borne by the insuring company. They had every reason to be gratified with the balance-sheet.

Life Department

In the life department 2,244 new policies were issued during 1931 for sums assured of £2,191,893 gross, of which £73,300 was re-assured and £2,118,593 retained. The ordinary life business showed an increase of £245,026 on last year, which was very pleasing; but there was a falling off in business connected with staff welfare schemes, which was not surprising in view of the acute trade depression. The rate of interest earned last year on their total life assurance and annuity funds amounted to £4 12s. 6d. per cent. after deduction of income-tax, as compared with £4 15s. 1d. per cent. in 1930. The difference was accounted for by the increase in the rate of income-tax.

Quinquennial Valuation

The Quinquennial Valuation of the current Life and Annuity Funds was made at 31st December, 1931, the stringent bases of valuation previously adopted being maintained. The Valuation showed a gross surplus in the participating sections of £229,020, of which it was decided to distribute £223,026 and carry forward the balance. In the non-participating section of the Life Fund the gross surplus amounted to £128,178, of which £75,000 had already been transferred to the Shareholders Profit and Loss Account, leaving a balance of £53,178, which the Board had decided to carry forward.

Fire Department

In the Fire Department the net premiums amounted to £833,396, a decrease of £34,406 as compared with the preceding year. The whole of this reduction took place in connection with the North American business. The incurred loss ratio to earned Premium was 51 per cent. compared with 53 per cent. in 1930.

The ordinary premiums for the year on Personal Accident and Sickness Policies amounted to £54,548, and the sum of £14,059 had been transferred to Profit and Loss Account.

General Insurance and Motor Departments

It would be noted that whereas up to the current year the general insurance account included motor insurance, that branch of the business, owing to the provisions of the Road Traffic Act, was now the subject of a separate account. The business now included in this account was general business such as engineering, indemnity, burglary, public liability, live stock, and various other classes of accident insurance, the total premiums amounting to £396,456, and the sum of £68,942 was transferred to profit and loss account.

In the Motor Department, although they had been very careful in the selection of business, they were able to record an increase of £75,000 in the premium income. After making a full reserve for outstanding losses and unexpired liability, the net results had been very satisfactory.

In the Marine Department the fund carried forward now stood at £467,572, equivalent to 113 per cent. of the premium income.

Turning to the Profit and Loss Account, the net interest worked out at £151,450, an increase of £3,836 over the previous year. The net cost of dividends for the year amounted to £140,542, so there was a margin on interest alone over the net dividend paid of £10,908. The amount credited to Profit and Loss Account from the various trading Departments was £155,544. After transferring £150,000 from the General Reserve Fund, they were able to allocate £100,000 to the Investment Fluctuation Account and £125,000 to Exchange Reserve Account to provide for variations in exchange during the year, and, after allowing for expenses not charged elsewhere, the balance remaining was sufficient to provide dividends at the rate of 20 per cent. on the Ordinary Shares, 6 per cent. on the Preference Shares, and 10 per cent. on the Preferred Ordinary Shares. There remained to be carried forward £72,787, an increase of £4,106 on the corresponding figure for last year.

The Report and Accounts were unanimously adopted, and the proceedings closed with a vote of thanks to the Chairman, Directors and Staff.

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